PUERTO RICAN ENGLISH TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF DISTANCE READING

LESSONS IN TIMES OF COVID 19

Dissertation Presented to the
Department of Graduate Studies
College of Education
University of Puerto Rico
Rio Piedras Campus
In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement for the
Degree of Doctor in Education in Curriculum & Instruction, with
Specialization in Teaching English as a Second Language

by

Miriam Cruz Colón
© Copyright, 2021

Dissertation presented as Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the degree of Doctor in Education

PUERTO RICAN ENGLISH TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF DISTANCE READING

LESSONS IN TIMES OF COVID 19

MIRIAM CRUZ COLÓN

M.A. English, Inter American University of San German, 2006
B.S. Biology, Inter American University of San German, 1988

Approved on July 12, 2021 by the Dissertation Committee:

_____
    Kevin S. Carroll, Ph. D.
    Dissertation Committee, Chair

_____
    Elsie Candelaria Sosa, Ed. D.
    Committee Member

_____
    Eduardo J. Suarez Silverio, Ph. D.
    Committee Member

DEDICATION

I want to thank God for giving me health, knowledge, and perseverance to continue this long journey and accomplish this goal today. To my beloved husband Alberto Cuevas Toro, I could have not done this without him. Thank you for the long road trips and the time you spent waiting for me during my classes, supporting, and inspiring me every step of the way so I could pursue this dream.

To my dear daughter Mairim Ramirez Cruz, part of my legacy to you is to always try harder and never give up your dreams. I want you all to know that you can accomplish anything if you put your heart into it. To my sister Mily Cruz Colón and my mother Pilar Colón, thank you for your support and for believing in me.

I want to thank my friends Maria Cabán, Mary Blanco, Johanna Vivonni, and Enid Camacho, who shared their best advice whenever I needed it. Thank you for listening to me when I needed support. You will always be very special to me.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It is important for me to acknowledge the wonderful people that gave me guidance and support along this exciting journey. To the members of my committee, who led me through my dissertation, I would have never done it without them.

To Dr. Kevin Carroll (chair), Dr. Elsie Candelaria, and Dr. Eduardo Suarez thank you all for directing me to do my research as a phenomenology. You were the dream team I needed to accomplish my objective and I learned so much from all of you on this great journey. I applied essential concepts in my research of what I learned from Dr. Suarez' Ethics' course. Thank you for being part of this process. After taking three core courses with Dr. Elsie Candelaria, I felt honored that she accepted to be part of my committee. I admired her commitment, always kept me moving forward, offering me her insights based on her expertise. Her enthusiasm and positivity always energized me to keep on going. I will never thank her enough for her kindness and support. My deepest respect and admiration to my dissertation committee, you are the best!

From Dr. Annette Lopez de Mendez (RIP) I learned that a dissertation is not a simple project; that we need to be perseverant and work continuously toward our objectives. It was not an easy task, but her words made me understand that I could finish this doctoral degree no matter how far I lived from University of Puerto Rico.

Finally, I want to thank the five participants who offered their time to be part of this research study. I deeply respect their work as educators, especially in these difficult times of the COVID 19 pandemic. During their interviews they showed how passionate they were and did the best they could expressing their perceptions of distance teaching as they helped their students reach their academic goals. Thank you so much!

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to document the perceptions of five Puerto Rican English teachers from one private school regarding the implementation of distance reading lessons. The focus of this phenomenological research was to explore teachers' lived experiences and perceptions of their beliefs, opinions, attitudes, resources, benefits, and the challenges of teaching distance reading lessons in times of COVID 19. K-12 private-bilingual school English teachers' perceptions were gathered through semi-structured interviews and a focus group. The analysis was developed through Moustakas's adapted version of Van Kaam's phenomenological data analysis procedure to acquire a description of the phenomenon related to the transition to online synchronous instruction.

The study results revealed that some participants viewed the transition to online-synchronous teaching as a positive one, while others perceived the transition as one full of challenges. All participants used Zoom as their main teaching platform and most integrated Google Forms, Power Point, and YouTube to supplement and enrich their lectures. Results exposed how teachers considered the schools' curricular content as one designed to be flexible which facilitated instruction. Most participants highlighted the importance of peer coaching, self-training, and having multiple session workshops to learn key concepts and teach distance reading lessons properly.

Some implications were that most participants showed a positive attitude, keeping students motivated through various teaching strategies. Educational leaders and supervisors can administer surveys to teachers, parents, and students, to identify emotional and educational needs that may arise during the transition to distance instruction. Adequate training and peer coaching could help teachers improve their

technological skills, instructional methods, and the assessment of students' reading skills successfully.

Some recommendations on future studies were related to the selection of larger samples, including teachers from other private schools, also located in the southern part of Puerto Rico, that have been forced to teach their reading lessons virtually because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Research can also be directed toward students' perceptions regarding their attitudes, beliefs, and opinions on their experiences during distance reading lessons. Further studies should also be extended to teachers of other subjects to gather insights into their best practices of distance teaching.

RESUMEN

El propósito de este estudio fue revelar las percepciones de cinco maestras de inglés puertorriqueñas de una escuela privada, sobre la implementación de lecciones de lectura a distancia. El enfoque de esta investigación fenomenológica fue explorar las experiencias vividas por las maestras y las percepciones de sus creencias, opiniones, actitudes, recursos, beneficios y desafíos de enseñar lecciones de lectura a distancia en tiempos de COVID 19 y terremotos. Se recopilaron las percepciones de maestras que enseñan inglés del K-12 en una escuela privada-bilingüe, a través de entrevistas semiestructuradas y un grupo focal. El análisis se desarrolló a través de la versión adaptada de Moustakas del procedimiento de análisis de datos fenomenológicos de Van Kaam para adquirir una descripción del fenómeno de transición a la instrucción en línea-sincrónica.

Los resultados del estudio revelaron que algunos participantes vieron la transición a la enseñanza en línea sincrónica de manera positiva, mientras que otros percibieron la transición como una llena de desafíos. Todos los participantes utilizaron Zoom como su principal plataforma de enseñanza y la mayoría integraron Google, PowerPoint y YouTube para complementar y enriquecer sus lecciones de lectura. Los resultados mostraron que las maestras consideraron el contenido curricular de la escuela como uno diseñado para ser flexible, lo que facilitaba la instrucción. La mayoría de los participantes destacaron la importancia del entrenamiento entre pares, la autocapacitación y la realización de talleres de sesiones múltiples para aprender conceptos claves y enseñar lecciones de lectura a distancia de manera adecuada.

Algunas implicaciones fueron que la mayoría de las participantes mostraron una actitud positiva, manteniendo a los estudiantes motivados a través de diversas

estrategias de enseñanza. Los líderes y supervisores educativos pueden administrar encuestas a maestros, padres y estudiantes para identificar las necesidades emocionales y educativas que puedan surgir durante la transición a la instrucción a distancia. La capacitación adecuada y el entrenamiento entre pares podrían ayudar a los maestros a mejorar sus habilidades tecnológicas, métodos de instrucción y evaluar el nivel de proficiencia en lectura de sus alumnos de forma exitosa.

Algunas recomendaciones sobre estudios futuros pueden basarse en la selección de muestras más grandes, incluyendo maestros de otras escuelas privadas, también ubicadas en la parte sur de Puerto Rico, que se hayan visto obligados a enseñar sus lecciones de lectura virtualmente debido a la pandemia de COVID-19 y los terremotos. La investigación también puede dirigirse hacia las percepciones de los estudiantes respecto a sus actitudes, creencias y opiniones sobre sus experiencias durante lecciones de lectura a distancia. Los estudios adicionales también deben extenderse a los maestros de otras materias para recopilar conocimientos sobre sus mejores prácticas de enseñanza a distancia.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

List of Figures

CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

Introduction

Background

This study came from the researcher's interest to explore teachers' perspectives toward their teaching methods in times of COVID 19. The use of masks and social distancing has been established based upon the fact that the SARS-CoV-2 virus, commonly called the COVID-19, has spread worldwide, altering peoples' lives, and remarkably inhibiting curricular activities. This highly contagious virus is transported through the air and may produce symptoms ranging from plain cold symptoms to harsh respiratory illnesses or even death (Departamento de Salud Gobierno de Puerto Rico, 2020). As a result of the spread of COVID 19, no face-to-face courses were offered as of to start the semester of August 2020, in private schools or public schools of the (PRDE) Puerto Rico Department of Education.

The COVID 19 pandemic had major implications for public and private school teaching. The transition to distance learning as a way to expose students to class material synchronously and asynchronously (Hall et al., 2020). The use of flipped and blended models have shown to be of great benefit as they help raise students' performance in the areas of reading and other language arts, developing students' autonomy while encouraging students' centered learning (Kvashnina & Martynko, 2016). People from Puerto Rico still remember 2017's Hurricanes Maria and Irma, as they left a path of destruction and gloom (Irizarry, 2019), from which some are still recovering. But in the spring of 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic forced many more schools to shift to an online teaching interface placing extra burden on educators (Kaden, 2020) and, at the same time generating impetus toward teaching through technological platforms that were new for some and well known for others.

1

It is important to state that little or no research was found documenting the current realities caused by COVID 19 in Puerto Rico. However, research on the flipped classroom is abundant and similar to what these teachers encountered during this trying period. Experts describe the flipped classroom as a model that blends the best techniques from both, online and offline teaching to improve student learning (Christensen, Horn, & Staker, 2013). The flipped method is best known by how content is instructed switching back and forth from online to face-to-face and its benefits for students' access to information, increased performance, and high motivation (Newman, Kim, Lee, Brown, & Huston, 2016).

Teachers' perceptions may fluctuate according to their personal beliefs as capable educators, their thorough knowledge of their subject, teaching protocols, and their receptivity to learn and teach in new contexts (Abdulaziz, 2020). It is essential to know how teachers' perceptions affect their teaching, as well as to understand their view of teaching reading through remote platforms. This may also be a way to clarify teachers' needs in order to improve their distance reading lessons, paying special attention to how their teaching has evolved during the COVID 19 pandemic; always considering that digital teaching is a process that will continue until we surmount the pandemic.

This phenomenology study took place using the perceptions of English teachers in a K-12 private school located in an urban area near the south-west coast of Puerto Rico. The participants were 5 English teachers who had all experienced the various fluctuations in their teaching because of the COVID 19 pandemic.

The purpose of this study was to explore teachers' perceptions of their use of distance learning in their teaching of reading lessons due to the COVID 19 pandemic on the island. The main interest was focused on English teacher's educational practices in teaching reading lessons that can benefit student's acquisition of English as a second language through distance learning. Flipped learning implementation has been found to provide significant improvement in students' reading comprehension in Taiwan especially if class

2

topics are related to students' backgrounds and everyday activities (Huang & Hong, 2016). Teachers' experiences may provide an understanding of the benefits and challenges encountered by educators through the forced implementation of a different approach due to unexpected life-threatening reasons such as COVID 19.

Phenomenology is considered an important method for knowledge acquisition as it refers to the essence of experiences without the influence of external judgments; therefore, lived experiences do not need to go through profound analysis (Moustakas, 1994e). Semi-structured interviews and focus group interviews with open-ended questions served to gather essential data and helped the researcher acknowledge teachers' points of view, and teaching challenges (Kaden, 2020). It was essential to know the strategies and activities that may help educators deliver course content under the novel circumstances caused by the COVID 19 Pandemic in Puerto Rico. Through this exploratory study of teachers' perceptions and lived experiences, significant knowledge was gained on how teachers perceive distance learning in reading lessons, while providing insight into the participating school's context, existing teaching resources, and teachers' needs as they lived through this challenging 2020 year.

Statement of the Problem

A series of events happened at the beginning of 2020 that seriously affected Puerto Rico. The first one was a series of earthquakes that critically damaged schools, houses, and buildings. This situation also prevented students from going to schools and created an educational gap. This, followed by the worldwide spread of the deadly COVID-19 virus, forced the government to protect citizens, limiting the outing and gatherings of people through a quarantine order as a means of controlling the infection throughout the community (Cotto, 2020). These unexpected events forced school administrators and teachers to acquire remediated distant learning approaches that left a lot to be desired. Education experts have pointed out issues such as the lack of well-prepared, knowledgeable

3

professors and teachers that can use distant learning techniques without problems. The experts have particularly stressed the fact that educators are utilizing 20th-century teaching perspectives to teach 21st-century students; this makes teachers focus on teacher-centered learning instead of student-centered learning (Santiago, 2020). Teachers who are not well trained on digital platforms may feel insecure about their performance and this may affect the teaching process. Furthermore, the lack of students' access to necessary technology and motivation may affect the quality of learning as well as teachers' perceptions and attitudes (Ali, 2020).

During the summer of 2020 more than 20,000 teachers received training on the use of technological tools such as Microsoft Teams, Moodle, and educational modules since these were technologies that were not utilized by most educators in their daily teaching (Departamento de Educación de Puerto Rico, 2020). In addition to this, teachers were given computers to facilitate the teaching process as they got ready to initiate distance teaching and learning on August 17, 2020. The accelerated transformation of a traditional educational setting to a distance educational setting may cause high levels of stress to educators, affecting their feelings, and certainly their motivation (Espino, Fernandez, Hernandez, Gonzales, & Alvarez, 2020). A study in Kuala Terengganu, Malaysia, investigated teachers' perceptions through interviews regarding the use of Information Communication and Technology (ICT) in their teaching (Lin & Yunus, 2012). Participants' perceptions were mostly positive; however, they did also mention facility limitations and their need to reflect on their teaching while utilizing technology.

A phenomenological study that explores teachers' perceptions on distance reading lessons in times of COVID 19 is essential because it can provide much-needed understanding, and information on the impact of these changes on beliefs, attitudes, motivations, and needs while under the novel circumstances that involve this abrupt learning alteration. Interviews may offer a profound awareness of the phenomenon (Creswell, 2012)

4

and may enlighten our understanding of this sudden change. A look at English teachers' perceptions and their personal experiences as they go through this technological change, can serve to guide stakeholders on future curricular changes as well as planning for readiness in situations like a post-hurricane, or a recurring pandemic.

A transcendental phenomenological method guided this study. This method is a highly structured process in which the researcher used intuition, imagination, and universal structures, while setting aside prejudgments or previous knowledge, as a way to capture participants' perceptions of the phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994b). This study was appropriate to explore and identify the perspectives of English teachers who were required to change to a distance education setting. Gathering information from people experiencing the same phenomenon provided valuable information that may lead to new educational policies (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Understanding the lived experiences of educators who needed to adjust to a new way of teaching reading lessons, can aid stakeholders, and other educational personnel to understand issues and address deficiencies. This may also help them provide teachers with the necessary tools, training, and strategies to reinforce and empower them for a better transition to virtual teaching and learning.

Purpose of the Research

The purpose of this transcendental phenomenological study was to explore and analyze the life experiences of K-12 English teachers in a private school located in the southwestern part of Puerto Rico as they had gone through a transition from a face-to-face to a distance learning method of instruction during the COVID 19 pandemic. The use of technology in second language learning allows access to information through videos, graphics, recordings, and visuals which may serve to model essential academic skills and ease the understanding of concrete and abstract concepts. Technology raises interest which leads to better completion of tasks. It can also increase autonomy as reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills can be practiced at the students' own pace and from any place

(Zhou, 2018). Flipped learning is considered a methodology that places the student at the center of the learning process (Sung, 2015).

By interviewing the K-12 English teachers included in this study, a description of the transition emerged that provided an understanding of the phenomenon as experienced by these private school educators. The interview questions focused on teachers' beliefs, attitudes, perceptions, and needs as they went through the process of teaching reading lessons through a virtual platform synchronously and asynchronously. A flipped educational environment provides a flexible setting with virtual PowerPoints or videos and some face to face activities such as group work and games (Yen, 2020). Well-developed flipped classroom training offers teachers ways of improving their motivation and beliefs regarding their teaching methods (Abdulaziz, 2020). As a result of the study, a better understanding of teachers' perceptions of a virtual educational implementation surfaced; these findings can be used to help curriculum developers improve future distance reading lessons.

Justification of the Research

This study was based on the need to understand teachers' perceptions of distance reading lessons developed in a new school year with an uncommon and sudden shift to an online distance learning method. The COVID 19 virus and the frequent earthquakes on the island have driven many teachers out of their comfort zones and toward new remote technologies that may assist today's teaching in this unparalleled setting. As a result of this virtual shift, teachers went through extensive ICT training to learn all the necessary skills and strategies that were used in platforms such as Moodle, Google Teams, and Canvas. Today's digitalized world requires up to date educational practices that encourage active learning, and technology provides access to learning from almost anywhere and may support learning communities that motivate students with different levels of achievement or cognitive styles (Zhou, 2018).

6

This study focused on teachers' perceptions of distance reading lessons in times of the COVID 19 pandemic. As an English teacher, the researcher has always seen firsthand how English as a second language (ESL) students in Puerto Rico tend to have difficulty reaching adequate levels of reading comprehension. There is a relationship between not being able to reach adequate reading levels by the end of third grade and the failure to succeed academically and professionally in the future (Fiester, 2013). A whole school flipped approach consisting of face to face and digital technology may help second language learners improve their reading comprehension skills (Prescott, Bundschuh, Kazakoff, & Macaruso, 2018). ESL teachers need to feel that their reading lessons are well-designed and can help students reach grade-level reading comprehension in this new instructional setting.

Teachers' perceptions may vary since each one has a unique set of beliefs, attitudes, and motivations according to personal experiences. These beliefs, attitudes, and motivations may force them to visualize a remote learning environment with diverse perspectives and may also affect their teaching styles and self-efficacy. Administrators and stakeholders need to consider teachers' feelings and emotions, listening to what they have to say about their personal and working experiences as a way to support them and strengthen their resilience due to present and future classroom delivery adjustments (Reich et al., 2020).

Some teachers still consider face-to-face education the best educational setting (Ali, 2020). Other educators' perceptions point to having positive attitudes toward new technologies although they still complain about encountering difficulties such as the lack of technological knowledge or internet access (Saglam & Sert, 2012). It is important to consider that many educators, especially the more experienced ones, may struggle through the transition to a new remote teaching scenario. This may provoke a decrease in their self-efficacy and their distinctive identity as educators (Reich et al., 2020). Flipped lessons

provide flexibility and resilience, so necessary in times of the COVID 19 pandemic and other natural disasters; however, teachers need to revise their curriculums to incorporate ICT tools successfully (Ali, 2020). Improving teachers' professional development may encourage better attitudes and motivation, which may lead to better confidence (Ali, 2019), self-efficacy, and optimism to teach successfully (Moghari, Lavasani, Bagherian, & Afshari, 2011).

This phenomenological study may contribute to the body of knowledge, seeking to ascertaain teachers' perceptions, motivations, attitudes, beliefs, and feelings through their lived experiences teaching reading lessons through remote technologies. The challenges and benefits of virtual teaching may help stakeholders and supervisors identify adequate training and other online support for educators in need of improving distance reading lessons.

Research Questions

The research questions that serve as the foundation for this study are as follows:

1. How do ESL teachers from a K-12 private school describe their lived experiences implementing distance reading lessons in times of the COVID 19 pandemic?

2. What are ESL teachers' perceptions on the use of distance reading lessons in times of the COVID 19 pandemic?

Sub-questions:

a. What are teachers' attitudes on the use of distance reading lessons?

b. What are teachers' beliefs on the use of distance reading lessons?

c. What are teachers' opinions on the use of distance reading lessons?

d. What necessary resources do ESL teachers perceive as important for successful implementation of distance reading lessons in times of COVID 19 pandemic?

e. What benefits, if any, do K-12 ESL private school teachers describe from implementing distance reading lessons in times of COVID 19 pandemic?

f. What challenges, if any, do K-12 private ESL teachers describe from implementing distance reading lessons in times of COVID 19 pandemic?

Definition of Terms

a) Phenomenology = Describes the common meaning for several individuals of their lived experiences of a concept or a phenomenon (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

b) Motivation = Motivation is an inner state that stimulates, guides, and preserves behavior (Woolfolk, 2004).

c) Distance Learning = The use of Informative Communication and Technology (ICT) for virtual schooling (Chellapan, Meer, Pratt, & Wass, 2018)

d) Flipped Learning Model = The classroom flip is a model where videos and other interactive material are given to students to study at home and class time is used to work on active group learning (Mok, 2014).

e) Second Language Acquisition = Second language acquisition (SLA) relates to the process people go through as they acquire a language after learning their first language as a child. The added language is identified as a second language (L2) (Saville-Troke, 2006).

f) Constructivism = The constructivist theory is based upon how children construct their knowledge within their environment but using their old experiences to create new knowledge (Linares, 2007).

g) Perception = Perception is how the human being establishes awareness or contact with the rest of the world (Efron, 1969).

h) Perceived Self-Efficacy = People's beliefs about their capabilities to produce effects (Bandura, 1994).

9

i) Self-Regulation = Exercise of influence over one's motivation, thought processes, emotional states, and patterns of behavior(Bandura, 1994).

j) Synchronous learning = Face-to-face flipped learning modality, including case-based presentations, team-based discussions, panel discussions, expert-led discussions, role-plays and student presentations, discussions and debates, utilizing Smartphone apps, tablets, think pair-and-share activities and clicker questions to enable real-time formative assessments (individual or paired quizzes of student learning), to provide immediate feedback concerning misconceptions or gaps in students' knowledge to reach higher levels of Bloom's taxonomy (Basilaia & Kvavadze, 2020; Knight, 2020; Reich et al., 2020; Reimers & Schleicher, 2020).

k) Asynchronous learning = Learning modality for pre-class flipped preparation including pre-recorded lectures in the form of podcasts/vodcasts, screencasts, annotated notes, captured videos, pre-readings, interactive videos from online repositories, case-based presentations, and simulations (Basilaia & Kvavadze, 2020; Knight, 2020; Reich et al., 2020; Reimers & Schleicher, 2020).

l) Microsoft Teams = learning management systems with applications for video conferencing (Mukhtar, Javed, Arooj, & Sethi, 2020).

m) BlackBoard = Instructional management system, promotes teacher-students and student-student interaction (Almoeather, 2020).

CHAPTER II THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND REVIEW OF LITERATURE

INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides an overview of the literature regarding aspects of teachers' perceptions, beliefs, motivations, views, and attitudes toward new distance learning technologies and teaching styles. Instructional models and technology platforms for distance teaching are explained to provide the reader with useful information related to remote or distance teaching. A thorough review of Moustakas' theoretical framework was performed through the discussion of terms such as: Intentionality, Reduction, Bracketing or Epoché, Noesis and Noema, and Horizon. Theoreticians enlightened our understanding through their studies on teachers' perceptions of technology, studies on distance reading instruction, their current benefits, and challenges for educators.

Theoretical Framework

This transcendental phenomenology research study was focused on Moustakas's phenomenological model, adapted from the philosophy of Edmund Husserl (1859-1938), as his view of understanding a phenomenon is reaching its essence so nothing should be presupposed (Peoples, 2020). Even though many did not support Husserl's views, he did not confront his opponents but instead remained focused on his philosophical ideas. Moustakas followed Husserl's philosophical views and decided to adopt his behavior, retreating into himself, studying and reflecting on personal experiences; this led to an understanding of how those experiences would define the main ideas of transcendental phenomenology. There are several important terms in Moustakas's theoretical framework that need to be discussed. These are Intentionality, Reduction, Bracketing or Epoché, Noesis and Noema, and Horizon (Moustakas, 1994e). It is important to comprehend these terms since they should they were considered and applied every step of the way in the development of this study.

11

Intentionality

Intentionality is viewed as the conscious way of perceiving (Creswell & Poth, 2018). In transcendental phenomenology, the intention refers to involving the Ego or being conscious while perceiving real or non-existing objects (Husserl, 1931). Husserl also said that the inner experience of being conscious, along with the action of perceiving and the thing being perceived, are both deeply related, and are shaped by the individuals' previous experiences and thoughts. The individual and the environment need to be unified so that intentional acts and feeling acts can take place. Smith (as cited in Moustakas 1994a) gives the following example:

Consider the experience of joy on witnessing a beautiful landscape. The landscape is the matter, but the landscape is also the object of the intentional act; its perception in consciousness. The matter enables the landscape to become manifest as an object rather than merely exist in consciousness. The interpretive form is the perception that enables the landscape to appear; thus, the landscape is self-given; my perception creates it and enables it to exist in my consciousness. The objectifying quality is the actuality of the landscape's existence, as such, while the non-objectifying quality is the joyful feeling evoked in me by the landscape. (p.88)

The thing or object perceived can vary depending on factors such as time, place, previous experiences, wishes or feelings, disposition, or judgments (Moustakas, 1994e). He also explains that an object is viewed as a presence, but the perception of that object is only in the individual's consciousness. The object as a material thing will always be that, an object, but the individual's perception is what makes it appear in consciousness.

Bracketing or Epoché

Bracketing or epoché consists of suspending self-biases, purely viewing the phenomena. Peoples (2020) describes bracketing as the researcher assumes the position of an alien, like the famous movie character ET, coming down to earth with no preconceived

thoughts. Through bracketing, researchers' experiences are present but are set aside to grasp the participants' experience with a clear mind, simply seeing what is purely captured, in other words, the real essence (Giorgi & Giorgi, 2011; Moustakas, 1994b). Epoché is developed within the description of experiences while, putting aside the knowledge that may interfere with consciousness (Giorgi, Giorgi, & Morley, 2017). The term epoché came from Greece, with the connotation of keeping away, desisting of doing something, or staying away from preconceived ideas (Moustakas, 1994a). He states:

The epoché is a way of looking and being, an unfettered stance. Whatever or whoever appears in our consciousness is approached with an openness, seeing just what is there and allowing what is there to linger. This is a difficult task and requires that we allow a phenomenon or experience to be just what it is and to come to know it as it presents itself. One's whole life of thinking, valuing, and experiencing flows on, but what captures us in any moment and has validity for us is simply what is there before us as a compelling thing, viewed in an entirely new way. Thus, the epoché gives us an original vantage point, a clearing of mind, space, and time, a holding in abeyance of whatever colors the experience or directs us, anything whatever that has been put into our minds by science or society... Epoché includes entering a pure internal place, as an open self, ready to embrace life in what it truly offers. From the epoché, we are challenged to create new ideas, new feelings, new awareness, and understandings. We are challenged to come to know things with a receptiveness and a presence that lets us be and lets situations and things be, so that we can come to know them just as they appear to us. (p.85-86)

When an individual applies the epoché or bracketing process, it produces a sense of isolation (Husserl, 1931), since there is a need to distance themselves from others' perspectives and using questioning that will enlighten the essence of the phenomenon. It is not easy to accomplish epoché, so it needs to be practiced.

A focus on the experience, paying attention to it with a pure conscience; eliminating any personal judgments as well as other people's opinions that may interfere with capturing the absolute essence (Moustakas, 1994a). In this study, epoché was used as participants were questioned, while describing the participants' perceptions, keeping prejudgments and biases away from the process of finding the essence of their experiences regarding their perceptions of teaching distance reading lessons.

Within the same process of epoché, there is what Moustakas (1994a) calls reflective mediation. He describes reflective mediation as a way of letting biases and pre-judgments enter the researchers' consciousness as many times as wanted until there is an inner sense of cessation. The researcher writes down what are considered biases and presumptions, reflects on them until they are no longer considered biases, consciously preparing themselves to purely describe the person, situation, or problem. Moustakas (1994a) accepts that the process of epoché or bracketing is not easily achieved and may be impossible for many, depending on previous experiences that were deep or intense, inhibiting self-reflection and slowing or refraining the ability to reach a state of pure consciousness. Nevertheless, he suggests that if the researcher is determined to practice and focus on the essence, then the process of Epoché can be accomplished.

Reduction

Reduction is deemed as the deliberate usage of bracketing to sense every experience as unique, going back to the essence of meaning (Lucca & Berríos, 2009; Moustakas, 1994b). In Phenomenological Reduction, there is a relationship between how the phenomenon is described and its perception. Moustakas(1994a) refers to phenomenological reduction as an ongoing conscious process of observations and textural descriptions referring to the physical qualities of an object or situation in each context. Many times, people make observations leaving out the conscious part, consequently losing the actual presence of the object. Individuals unconsciously or by intuition search for internal

experiences to make sense of the object in sight. After filtering conscious experiences and by using intuition, individuals can identify the objects' characteristics in each context (Moustakas, 1994a). In this study, phenomenological reduction was used, paying close attention to participants responses to the research questions, first through individual interviews and later through focus group interviews with the goals of capturing the phenomenon through their voices.

Individuals' can consciously perceive thus, they can also make connections with saved or previous images or thoughts (Husserl, 1931). There is a need to visualize the phenomenon from all possible perspectives, saturating the possibilities, even though some theoreticians believe that saturation of perceptions is never possible (I. Miller, 1984). When searching for the essence of the phenomenon, repetitive observations cause introspection, adjusting subsequent perceptions (Moustakas, 1994e). He also explains how reflection is reached if the individual can competently describe things or events, continuously correcting perceptions to encounter newer perspectives, making things clearer and leaving behind the initial unclear illusion of the object. Moustakas (1994c) gives a simple example of correcting perceptions as when we see an object at a distance and as soon as the object comes closer it changes our perspective since we see in-depth details that were absent before.

Imaginative Variation is also found within the process of phenomenological reduction and has to do with attaining the experience but in a structured way (Moustakas, 1994e). Husserl (1931) refers to Imaginative Variation as the "…Eidos, the pure essence, can be exemplified intuitively in the data of experience, …perception, …memory…, also in the mere data of phantasy" (p.57). There are unlimited understandings of objects or situations that can somehow harmonize into one single experience (Moustakas, 1994e). From the process of Imaginative Variation comes a structural description of the essence. Moustakas (1994d) states that:

15

In the phenomenological model that I employ, the structural essences of the

Imaginative Variation are then integrated with the textural essences of the

Transcendental-Phenomenological Reduction to arrive at a textural-structural

synthesis of meanings and essences of the phenomenon or experience being

investigated. (p.36)

Imaginative Variation was used in this phenomenological study as textural essences

were combined based on what participants experience, and on the structural essences of

their experiences based on their specific conditions and situations or contexts. Both, textural

and structural essences can lead the researcher to capture the pure essence of the

phenomenon. Imaginative Variation along with the phenomenological reduction process

allowed me to obtain the absolute essence of participants' distance learning perceptions of

their experiences regarding reading lessons.

Noesis and Noema

Noema and noesis come within the concept of intentionality. Husserl (1931) defines

noesis as a process that has to do with the essence, taking us to the meaning of what is

sensed regarding thoughts or opinions. He also considers noesis the psychic reflection of

what is being sensed. Within intentionality, there is a physical view and an ideal view.

Noesis involves the use of consciousness, the way people remember things, thoughts, and

their relatedness with their meanings considering that they are not shown and are tucked

away in their consciousness (Moustakas, 1994c).

Noema goes hand in hand with noesis and is directly related to the significance of

the perception just as it is recalled, as it is presented to us. Objects are seen in two ways, as

perceived in consciousness and the real object (Husserl, 1931). He gives the example of an

apple tree. On the one hand there is the perception of the tree, and on the other hand, there

is the delight of observing the tree which is a subconscious state of mind. Noema can be

described as what is seen or perceived as a whole; what is seen as such or as a full

16

(Moustakas, 1994c), although there have been cases in which perceptions have not been real, only a mere illusion, something that is just not physically there (Husserl, 1931).

Moustakas (1994c) established a deep relationship between noema and noesis. Both processes were used, viewing things as a whole and reflecting on what is being perceived, although the main objective should be the description of the phenomenon just as it is recalled by the participants, emphasizing the noematic process. This can be done with practice, understanding that researchers' opinions and thoughts should be kept out of the ongoing process of listening and describing participants' lived experiences to reach the essence of the phenomenon.

Husserl did not want to get into assigning any values to perceptions; therefore, in the process of interviewing participants, they were not questioned on why they gave their responses nor explanations or causes being scrutinized. The focus of the analysis was regarding perception of the phenomenon provided through their responses; not about if their perceptions were real or simply illusions. Intentional and detailed descriptions were made, avoiding any kind of interpretation of participants' responses, without passing any judgments.

Horizon

Horizon is identified as the current experience that cannot be avoided because it is lived now; it is our understanding of the situation (Moustakas, 1994c). Moustakas (1994d) stated:

In the horizonalization of perceptions every perception counts; every perception adds something important to the experience. The entity or object is never exhausted in properties and meanings. The features of a whole are the horizons, but as with all horizons the moment we single out one meaning the horizon extends again and opens up many other perspectives. Further, along with perceptual acts, as we look

17

and reflect there are acts of memory relevant to a phenomenon that reawaken

feelings and images and bring past meanings and qualities into the present. (p. 53)

During horizonalization, perceptions are considered essential and are included in the

description of participants' life experiences. The researcher should assume a receptive

posture to participants' reflections without discarding any since all contain essential data to

reach the essence of the phenomenon. Capturing textural as well as structural perceptions

of participants' life experiences through interviews can provide an in-depth view of the

challenges and benefits of teaching distance reading lessons in difficult times of the COVID-

19. Figure 2.1 illustrates how intentionality, Epoche or bracketing, reduction, noema and

noesis, and horizonalization are integrated in Moustakas' Phenomenological Philosophy.

This figure illustrates the elements involved within the researchers' perception in the

phenomenology process.
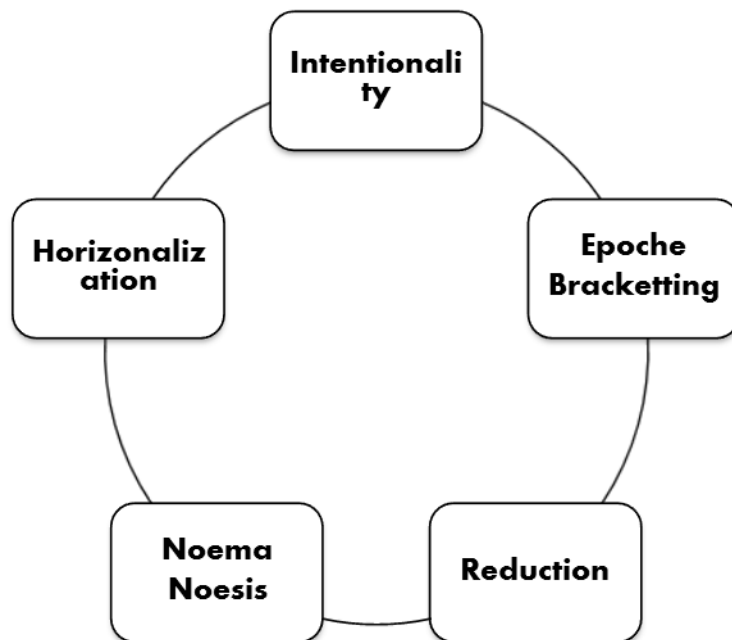
Figure 2.1

Moustakas' Phenomenological Philosophy.

Transcendental Phenomenology and Hermeneutic Phenomenology

It is essential to understand the main differences between Transcendental Phenomenology, which was the selected model for this study, and Hermeneutic Phenomenology (Moustakas, 1990). The transcendental qualitative model is focused on describing the circumstances perceived by the participants, always in a structured way. The researcher always ends up with a summary of experiences, and provides descriptions of these experiences, leaving out the intention to explain any of the participants' experiences. On the other hand, the heuristic model searches for relationships and the causes of the given phenomenon; it seeks to comprehend and analyze the participants' expressions. For this study, a transcendental phenomenology was selected over the hermeneutical approach because the objective is to describe the participants' experiences and perceptions, attitudes, beliefs, and views, the pure essence of the phenomenon related to English teachers' perceptions of distance reading lessons.

Relevant Review of Literature

Theoretical Background

This theoretical background involved the discussion of theoreticians' views of concepts such as attitudes, beliefs, opinions, and motivation and how these vary among different individuals.

Teachers Attitudes, Beliefs, Views, and Motivation

Teachers' Attitudes. Attitudes refer to an individual's particular feelings of acknowledging or rejecting something. Teachers' attitudes in the field of technology integration relate to their position of acceptance or refusal of the use of technology (Hew & Brush, 2007). When referring to teachers' attitudes, Rogers' Diffusion of Innovation Theory (DOI), explains the differences in teachers' attitudes and views about technology. This theory is subdivided into several categories such as the innovators, the early adopters, the

19

early majority, the late majority, and ends with the laggards (Brown, 2012; Rogers, 1983; Smith, 2018). The innovators are bold and like to step forward when learning new technologies or systems but are only 2.5% of the individuals; the early adopters, made up of 13.5% of the individuals, try to scrutinize innovations, before adapting them, while seeking and presenting its benefits to other colleagues so they also can become engaged. 34% of individuals are considered a part of the early majority; they take their time before adopting new technologies but do not like leadership positions. The late majority (34% of individuals) are conservative in their beliefs and tend to wait until others are convinced of acquiring new technologies before they can leap forward, accept, and adopt changes. Finally, the laggards, who make up 16% of the individuals, tend to resist innovations and adopt them when they have no other option; frequently after everybody else has already incorporated the innovation (Rogers, 1983). Teachers' interviews may provide valuable information regarding their attitudes toward the phenomenon of acquiring and adopting new technologies to develop distance reading lessons.

Rogers (1983) suggests that individuals' attitudes can be highly influenced by interpersonal channels. Interpersonal channels are developed through two-way communication, as a way of clarifying doubts, lowering psychological obstacles, and have better results if established with peers. Mass-media channels, as opposed to interpersonal channels, function as information spreaders to many spectators reaching them through communication media such as television and newspapers, but cannot provide individuals with the personal support that may be necessary to assimilate new technologies. Interpersonal channels can be a way to persuade individuals to change their attitudes and try new technologies. Encouraging teachers' participation in curricular changes can produce a positive impact on their attitudes as they are considered part of the process (Dones, 2015). Interpersonal channels can provide spaces for teachers' voices to be heard however, transitional issues must be dealt with along the way.

Teachers' Views and Beliefs. Efficacy beliefs may affect how people feel, think, and motivate themselves thus cognitive, motivational, and affective processes should be thoroughly discussed (Bandura, 1993). During the cognitive process individuals with high self-efficacy establish higher goals, with higher commitment to accomplish tasks and may envision scenarios of success. Individuals with low self-efficacy adopt visions of failure and self-doubt. It is not enough to have the necessary skills to be able to accomplish a goal, but the individual must have the self-belief to do so. Two individuals may possess the same cognitive skills but only the person with a higher self-belief may be able to perform.

Throughout the motivational process, efficacy is related to how the individual manages motivation. People practice forethought to elaborate beliefs of what their actions might be. They tend to predetermine their reachable goals. Sometimes individuals with low self-efficacy give up their goals if they encounter too many obstacles. On the other hand, people with high self-efficacy will persevere as they face failure. They can even set their goals higher and plan for higher challenges. Self-efficacy is a construct and may be related to specific academic areas. A person's self-efficacy may fluctuate among different fields of knowledge (Bandura, 1997).

There are differences in how individuals deal with stressful circumstances. Individuals that believe in their ability to manage threats and change may also control thoughts that provoke anxiety and may overcome stressful situations. On the contrary, individuals that cannot control their view of negative thoughts tend to amplify their perceptions of possible threats, therefore, they tend to avoid certain stressful situations (Bandura, 1993). Educators may develop the ability to distinguish their physiological states in situations such as distance education settings. Educators may react negatively and avoid participating or collaborating in new classroom activities because they might not feel and view themselves capable of accomplishing specific technological tasks. Teachers' opinions are based on their judgments of a specific topic; therefore, it is not easy for an individual to

21

have an impartial opinion on a topic because previous knowledge will obstruct their objectivity (Dones, 2015). Administrators should pay close attention to educators' behaviors and expressions toward technology because they reflect their self-efficacy. They can then provide support related to these personal views and beliefs through training and professional development.

Bandura's Sources of Self-Efficacy. Bandura (1997) suggests that self-belief is important because "motivation, affective state, and actions are based more on what they believe than what is objectively true" (p. 2). Self-belief or self-efficacy is the conviction a person has about what he or she can accomplish in different situations with the ability the individual holds. Academic achievement may be generated by efficacy beliefs and may be directly related to cognitive ability, education, gender, and attitudes. In other words, higher efficacy beliefs correlate to better performance (Pajares & Miller, 1994).

This model of self-efficacy establishes four sources or ways to strengthen an individual's self-efficacy. These are mastery experience, vicarious experience, social persuasion, and emotional and physiological states (Bandura, 1994). Through mastery experiences individuals strengthen their self-efficacy by surmounting barriers through perseverance and effort. Going through the process of achieving goals reinforces people's ability to achieve tasks that may be harder later.

Vicarious experiences are those acquired while seeing others succeed at achieving tasks that make the observer believe they too can reach goals. Individuals compare themselves to these models that should be similar in ability or else the persuasion will not be as effective. Individuals seek in others' abilities a way to assimilate their capabilities. Skilled models show effective ways to deal with difficult situations (Bandura, 1994). Learners may greatly benefit from group activities in which they can learn from capable peers through interactive activities and challenges; especially when they can see how others perform successfully. English teachers that are in need to learn Information Communication and

Technology (ICT) models of teaching may take advantage of higher-skilled teachers that master digital teaching.

Through social persuasion, individuals listen to verbal utterances on how competent they may be on certain tasks, and this may provide them the encouragement needed to succeed. It is important to follow closely the types of persuasion to be administered as idealistic persuasion may discourage an individual's motivation if the levels or ranks are too high. Negative persuasions may weaken an individuals' effort and challenging actions will not be attained (Bandura, 1994). Verbal expressions from skillful educators may encourage teachers that are in the process of learning new digital platforms and thereby improve their self-efficacy.

Individuals' emotional and physiological states relate to how emotional and physical responses are understood. For example, a person with high self-efficacy may recognize their state as one of excitement during a performance. On the contrary, a subject with low efficacy may identify with an affective state of nervousness and this may be a weakening factor to achieve personal goals (Bandura, 1994). The process of mastering remote platforms and eLearning platforms may place some teachers in stressful positions that diminish their self-efficacy. Educators should understand that learning new technologies is a process that takes time and will improve with practice.

Teachers' Self-efficacy. Teachers that do not have a high sense of instructional efficacy may designate less time for educational matters (Bandura, 1993). Teachers with high perceived efficacy may manage stressful scenarios and find better solutions to conflicts. On the other hand, teachers with low efficacy avoid dealing with educational conflicts in their classroom settings (Chwalisz, Altmaier, & Russell, 2011). Teachers with high self-efficacy may also be successful in engaging parents in their own children's education (Hoover, Bassler, & Brissie, 1992). Formal educational settings' main goal should be to provide individuals with the academic tools that strengthen their self-beliefs, (Bandura,

1993). It has been confirmed through research literature that teachers' levels of positive attitudes, determination, and professional goals may cause positive or negative reactions (Tschannen & Hoy, 2001) that can affect their personal and professional accomplishments.

Teachers' Motivation

Several motivation indicators may deal with individual concerns such as: Attitudes, behaviors, involvement, and performance (Dörnyei, 2001). Motivation is what makes an individual persist in a behavior, strive toward a goal, keep attention, interest, and satisfaction to learn a language (Saranraj & Zafar, 2016). A motivated learner wants to learn a language, shows effort, and keeps up with the learning tasks (Gardner, 1985); a motivated teacher encourages learning and supports students in the learning process. However, it is also true that unsupportive teachers that show a negative attitude may frustrate students especially while in learning a second language (Dişlen, 2013).

Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivation

The Determination Theory, one of the most important paradigms of psychology defines intrinsic and extrinsic motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Intrinsic motivation is greater than extrinsic motivation and depends on the satisfaction of certain physical needs, social needs, security, identity, and self-esteem (Maslow, 1970). Intrinsic motivation may be related to the individual's inner feelings and may influence involvement in a task and the effort to accomplish an activity (Saranraj & Zafar, 2016). Intrinsic motivation refers to the natural predisposition to search for new experiences and challenges, to broaden and stimulate one's capability to discover and learn (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Intrinsic motivation relates to physical and social fulfillment as well as the natural tendency to confront new tasks. Extrinsic motivation relates to external rewards like money, food, or recognitions which may guide the individuals' behavior to attain a goal. This external reward may come from a parent, a teacher, or another individual (Saranraj & Zafar, 2016). Extrinsic motivation may also be an attitude that is the result of evasion of some kind of punishment (Ryan &

Deci, 2000). Finally, extrinsic motivation causes the individual to recall an external incentive such as an award, wealth, or food and involves a change in attitude to reach that goal.

Bandura's Cognitive Theory

Efficacy beliefs may affect how people feel, think, and motivate themselves thus cognitive, motivational, and affective processes should be thoroughly discussed (Bandura, 1993). During the cognitive process individuals with high self-efficacy establish higher goals, with higher commitment to accomplish tasks and may envision scenarios of success. Individuals with low self-efficacy adopt visions of failure and self-doubt. It is not enough to have the necessary skills to be able to accomplish a goal. The individual must have the self-belief to do so. Two individuals may possess the same cognitive skills but only the person with a higher self-belief may be able to perform better.

Throughout the motivational process, efficacy is related to how the individual manages motivation. People practice forethought to elaborate beliefs of what their actions might be. They tend to predetermine their reachable goals. Sometimes individuals with low self-efficacy give up their goals if they encounter too many obstacles. On the other hand, people with high self-efficacy will persevere as they face failure. They can even set their goals higher and plan for higher challenges. Self-efficacy is a construct and may be related to specific academic areas. Once again, a person's self-efficacy may fluctuate among different fields of knowledge (Bandura, 1997).

There are differences in how individuals deal with stressful circumstances. Individuals that believe in their ability to manage threats may also control thoughts that provoke anxiety and may overcome stressful situations. On the contrary, people that cannot control their negative thoughts tend to amplify their perceptions of possible threats therefore they tend to avoid certain stressful situations (Bandura, 1993). Educators may develop the ability to distinguish their physiological states in situations such as flipped educational settings. Educators may react negatively and avoid participating or collaborating in new

25

classroom activities because they might not feel capable of accomplishing specific technological tasks. Educators should be aware of areas within themselves where self-efficacy may be lacking or in need of strengthening.

Defining Perceptions

Perception relates to the reasoning, interaction, and recognition of an individual and the environment (Efron, 1969). He states that "[p]erception is man's primary form of cognitive contact with the world around him. As all conceptual knowledge is based upon or derived from this primary form of awareness…" (p137). The way individuals interact with the environment may depend on how they perceive it through their senses, their interpretations, and the formulation of ideas, so unique to each person. There may be individuals with similar perceptions of the world, but the differences may depend on how each person assimilates and uses that information. For Husserl (1931) acquiring perceptions is an infinite process, with the constant addition of new ideas due to new experiences; that tend to lead to perceptual diversities.

Giorgi (as cited in Moustakas 1994a) describes how he learned to drive at the age of 16. He explained his perceptions of the process of driving a car for the first time. Learning how to start the engine, finding the brakes, feeling the insecurities of believing that maybe he was not able to do it right. Later, trying to drive, he felt that his car was too big for the road, making him feel he might be a threat to other drivers. Nevertheless, after a while and plenty of practice, he began noticing that his car was not that big after all and that the other cars on the road were on their lanes without being a threat. His perceptions change through the whole process of learning how to drive.

Teachers' perceptions of technology and distance learning may depend on where they are in their learning process. The transition to distance learning may influence teachers' perceptions of reality (Candelaria, 2008) and these perceptions evolve as new knowledge is acquired in the process. A teacher that is not used to utilizing technology may feel like Giorgi

when he began to drive, inexperienced, and tripping over the process with all the insecurities and limitations that learning a new approach may bring. Some teachers might be at the starting point, others maybe halfway through the process, and others may have turned into skilled learners with good mastery of implementing distance reading lessons.

Teachers' perceptions concerning their abilities are influenced by their life experiences, attitudes, beliefs, views, and motivations. This is not a stationary learning process, to the contrary, it is an evolving one, where perceptions are continuously changing. It is up to stakeholders, and supervisors to provide the necessary training and support so teachers can identify their limitations and know where they are within the process of learning how to teach using distance teaching of reading lessons.

Previous Research on Teachers' Perceptions of Technology

A study developed by (Hakim, 2020) in Saudi Arabia, studied teachers' perceptions and experiences toward the use of the Blackboard application in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teaching. A survey and interviews were administered to 80 EFL teachers. Participants ages fluctuated between 28 and 50 years of age and they taught students at different levels of English performance. A survey and an interview were the two instruments used to gather data. The survey collected participants' demographic information, in addition to their perception of Blackboard's efficiency in the teaching of English. A semi-structured interview was administered to 35 teachers to verify the information gathered from the survey and explored their perceptions on the use of the Blackboard application. The responses were expressed in terms of positive perceptions, negative perceptions, and obstacles encountered as they implemented the Blackboard application.

The results showed that most teachers perceived Blackboard as an organized platform that promoted good relationships between teachers and students and facilitated the teaching process, although some teachers found the platform not user-friendly. Teachers' willingness to implement technology in their classrooms may depend on their sense of self-

efficacy or self-beliefs (Hakim, 2020). Teachers that do not master technology may avoid using certain platforms. However, teachers that feel confident of their abilities will feel free to incorporate digital platforms without complaining. ICT can help learners that are at different levels of academic performance, making learning interactive with access to diverse teaching materials that are student-centered (Hakim, 2020). This may help improve teachers' perceptions regarding their abilities as they may see technology as an aid and not a threat to their self-efficacy or self-beliefs. Some limitations within this study were that researchers did not include teachers' experience, and gender information. Researchers also did not consider observing actual teachers; therefore, their interpretation was limited since the study was exclusively based on teachers' beliefs and personal experiences utilizing the Blackboard application in the learning process.

A study developed by Ali (2019) at the University of Fiji, explored educators' technological knowledge and how they influenced their students. The researcher administered a Likert scale-based survey and analyzed the data using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). To assess reliability, Cronbach's alpha coefficient was utilized. The main objective of the study was to support the fact that new technologies require that higher education teachers have adequate digital mastery to teach and to have students learn successfully. Through the survey, researchers explored teachers' perceptions of using digital tools, and which digital tools they specifically used in higher education.

Findings illustrated that Moodle and YouTube were the two most used learning platforms used by the study's participants. However, resources and willingness to use technology may be the result of motivation and confidence. The researcher suggested that educators should go through specific training to reinforce their digital skills and incorporate adequate technological equipment to improve students' performance (Ali, 2019). These types of studies may provide stakeholders essential information regarding digital demands in educational settings. It may also provide other researchers with important information

since there is a lack of investigations regarding educators' perceptions of ICT or digital teaching and learning.

Educators guide learning in educational settings and their attitude toward technology, positive or negative, may affect their commitment or unwillingness when it comes to using technology in the classroom (Gilakjani, Leong, & Ismail, 2013). This study's main limitation derives from the use of a survey as the only data collection tool utilized by the researcher. The lack of triangulation decreased its reliability concerning educators' perceptions in tertiary or post-secondary institutions.

A study developed in Mongolia was aimed at understanding primary teachers' perceptions regarding the use of ICT (Li, Yamaguchi, & Jun-ichi Takada, 2018). Focus group interviews and linear regressions were used as instruments to gather information that reflected teachers' opinions about their professional aptitude and the advantages of using ICT as a student-centered tool in teaching. The data analysis found that teachers' cooperation was what most affected their perceptions about using ICT models in student-centered educational settings. The researchers suggested the implementation of training to address teachers' lack of competence and motivation on the use of ICT in student-centered settings.

There were two limitations to this study. The first limitation was a result of the reduced regression models through which researchers may infer that there might be other unknown reasons generating fluctuations in teachers' perceptions toward the use of digital platforms. The second limitation was related to the limited use of primary schools in the study as only four regions participated; this number of schools is not enough to expand the findings to all Mongolia.

Distance or Remote Learning

There have been several definitions related to distance or remote learning in recent years (Johnston, 2020). Johnston mentions virtual network education and defines it as an

educational approach that gives students independence and freedom to learn through networks at their own pace. Another term utilized to identify distance learning is what Johnston calls cloned content education; there, students can access pre-recorded material asynchronously, contacting the educator only to clarify doubts. Finally, Johnston mentions the remote classroom education as a synchronous approach, in which students learn with direct instruction but have less opportunities to work at their own pace.

The formerly called computer-mediated communication (CMC), using internet platforms such as emails, chat rooms, blogs, and cellphones (Candelaria, 2008), has gone through constant evolution leading to the present Information Communication and Technology (ICT) model. This evolution has brought plenty of synchronous and asynchronous platforms that have been responsible for an educational transformation affecting teachers' perceptions as school settings go through a teaching and learning shift from teacher-centered learning to student centered learning (Li et al., 2018).

Synchronous and Asynchronous Learning

The COVID 19 pandemic has caused an unexpected change; the traditional brick-and-mortar, or face-to-face instruction has transitioned to synchronous and asynchronous learning within the remote classroom. This variation has led educators to seek alternate ways of teaching especially through platforms such as emails, Google Classroom, Microsoft Teams, and Blackboard. Synchronous instruction can also be developed through interactive platforms such as Kahoot, Google Classroom, Zoom, Mooc (Kaden, 2020), Flip Grid and, and VoiceThread (Reich et al., 2020).

Synchronous Learning

According to Marshall (2019), the Synchronous Online Flipped Learning Approach (SOFLA) happens when educators develop in-person meetings with their students through video conferencing. This real-time model is performed through virtual platforms such as Zoom, Microsoft Teams, and Adobe Connect (Marshall & Rodriguez-Buitrago, 2017). These

platforms offer the benefit of providing students with breakout rooms so students can work in groups, then present their work to the teacher or the entire class. Teachers need to schedule meetings so students can log in at a pre-set time (Basilaia & Kvavadze, 2020) and receive instruction as a whole group, individual groups, or one-on-one (Marshall, 2019).

Synchronous engaging platforms like Flip Grid and Voice Thread include discussion boards that are shared with students and they can reply by sharing their videos or comments. Threaded discussions can engage students in writing interactions as the whole group can contribute to develop significant texts (Sexto, 2015). Kahoot, a gaming platform that can be used to develop trivia quizzes, can be used in any communication device accessible to students. Through Google Classroom teachers can send students' feedback and at the same time collect data regarding students' performance. Google Meet and Zoom are synchronous platforms where teachers and students can have face-to-face, virtual interactions so necessary to develop teacher-student relationships. Realtime platforms like Edu Page and Slack, allow teachers and students to communicate at a specific time, which requires the development of an organized schedule (Basilaia & Kvavadze, 2020); this can cause issues concerning accessibility.

Asynchronous Learning

Virtual learning can be developed through asynchronous instructional delivery using learning platforms such as Blackboard, Moodle, Canvas (Webb & Doman, 2016), Zaption (Marshall, 2017), EDpuzzle, or Playposit. These use videos that contain embedded questions (Basilaia & Kvavadze, 2020; Marshall, 2017) that students can access and work with at their own time and pace. Teachers can provide students with videos, questions, quizzes, and track how many students watch the videos and answer the assigned questions. Other platforms for watching videos and answering questions are Moodle (Christensen et al., 2013), Blackboard (Marshall & Rodriguez-Buitrago, 2017), PowerPoint, TED TALKS, and Khan Academy. Educators can self-record short lessons utilizing

applications such as Screencast-o-Matic (Cunningham, 2017) and Camtasia (Bergmann &

Sams, 2012) these applications can also facilitate class content, access, and organization.

The negative side of asynchronous learning is that students need to be structured and show

intrinsic motivation therefore, this type of instruction is recommended for older students

(Marshall, 2019).

The importance of online, asynchronous learning and in-person or synchronous

learning is to direct the focus of learning toward a student-centered learning that makes

students feel engaged and connected with peers and teachers (Honeycutt & Glova, 2014).

These same researchers also recommend introducing activities such as scavenger hunts,

creating Hashtags, and offer students self-reflecting assignments that may develop higher

skills that are fun and motivating. Technology can be a valuable tool to involve students in

dynamic activities that place them at the center of their learning.

Both digital components, online and remote learning, should be offered using an

organized schedule. One structured way of developing distance learning is through the use

of Bloom's taxonomy (Zainuddin & Halili, 2016). Developing different levels of knowledge to

be addressed remotely or face-to-face or virtually online is essential. Higher levels of

knowledge such as applying, analyzing, evaluating, and creating, can be addressed face-to-

face; lower levels of knowledge such as remembering, and understanding can be done

online. This means that remembering and understanding, associated with the lowest levels

of knowledge in Bloom's taxonomy, can be developed using asynchronous tools where

students access the information from home and can work on tasks independently. On the

other hand, higher levels of knowledge such as applying, analyzing, evaluating, and creating

should be worked synchronously as they might require guidance and support from the

teacher (Zainuddin & Halili, 2016).

Distance reading lessons may be taught through a hybrid, full remote, or a full face-

to-face approach (Bergmann, 2020). The approach utilized by the teacher may rely on the

institution's pre-established procedures or by individual preferences according to each case. An example of a weekly distance class schedule is illustrated in Table 1, Weekly flipped class schedule for a distance reading lesson. This weekly reading lesson was developed for a hybrid teaching approach, although it may be modified to address synchronous or asynchronous teaching approaches. It is important to notice how every task is aligned to a specific level of Bloom's taxonomy and refers to face-to-face/remote or eLearning instruction.

Table 2.1
Weekly Flipped Class Schedule for Distance Reading Lessons

Day	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Type of Distance Learning	Face-to-Face/Remote	eLearning/ Virtual	Face-to-Face/Remote	eLearning/ Virtual	Face-to-Face/Remote
Daily Work Reading Activity	Make a story map	Make a timeline of events	Predict other possible outcomes	Explain what you think would happen next	Rewrite the ending of the story
Bloom's Taxonomy Level	Applying Analyzing	Remember Understand	Applying Analyzing	Remember Understand	Evaluating Creating

Note. Adaptation from Schedule for Each Group, by Jon Bergmann, 2020. Three Ways to Be Ready to Make the Best Use of Hybrid Class Time, https://flr.flglobal.org/dear-future-were-ready-three-ways-to-make-the-best-use-of-class-time/?fbclid=IwAR3rEOANgmiV_SHR1Q6kRnVR0tS6PxRL7wCYg0DuxXf_X1sRrKv-cxAl7jU. Flipped Learning 3.0

Strategies for Distance Teaching

There are several educational strategies utilized for distance learning. The flipped classroom, online flipping, and peer instruction are all personalized teaching strategies

associated with the flipped classroom method. Each strategy is guided by different principles that can adjust to teachers and students' particular needs.

The Flipped Classroom Method

Flipped Classroom is considered a model that intends to utilize the best of both teaching strategies, traditional and online, to enhance student engagement (Christensen et al., 2013). This flipped teaching strategy provides students with class material offline before coming to class and utilizes class time to interact and address higher-level skills (Love, Hodge, Grandgenett, & Swift, 2014). Flipped teaching is specifically designed to allow students to utilize asynchronous time to learn essential information through technology or reading material. This information will help them prepare to engage face-to-face or synchronous lessons (Ellis, Steed, & Applebee, 2006). Face-to-face and virtual learning are interconnected; in other words, there is an established sequence of skills, rotating among the two modalities to follow a sensible path of information and learning (Christensen et al., 2013).

The flipped classroom method definition has many similarities among research studies. For example, Alnuhayt (2018) explains how the flipped classroom method inverts the teaching-learning process as students work on interactive activities outside the classroom through videos. Class time is then utilized to develop collaborative activities related to videos and lectures recorded previously for students to watch outside the classroom or asynchronously (Butt, 2014; Newman et al., 2016; Webb & Doman, 2016). Through the flipped classroom method, synchronous class time may be utilized to have students practice interactively with peers while allowing teachers to provide individualized help for students who are low performers. Flipped learning increases students' class time on project-based activities since they cover class material in their free time through self-regulated online activities (Fan, 2018).

Several advantages should be considered as we plan to develop the flipped classroom model. The flipped instruction model allows students to interact with each other and with the classroom teacher (Alnuhayt, 2018). Another advantage of the flipped instruction method is that students can access the material assigned after class as they control the amount of time they spend viewing the videos that are based on their individual needs (Moffett, 2015). The flipped classroom positions students at the center of the learning process providing differentiation through interactive activities in and outside the classroom; it may also help students that for some reason cannot attend class (Bergmann & Sams, 2012, 2017; Fulton, 2012). The flipped classroom method may help improve students' self-efficacy as it provides them the opportunity to access class information outside the classroom and wherever they need it, so teachers can use in-class time to assist students and clarify concepts (Tucker, 2012). Taking all these aspects into consideration, the flipped classroom model offers students more time for face-to-face interaction, after class accessibility to class material, and may address individual needs as they can watch online lectures whenever they want and at their own pace.

Although the flipped classroom model has had great acceptance at all educational levels and has facilitated the process of accessing class material outside the classroom, some studies have shown that some students prefer the traditional lectures because they can clarify doubts instantly (A. Mazur, Brown, & Jacobsen, 2015). Some of the disadvantages identified within the flipped classroom model are related to the teacher's ability to prepare class content or to deal with possible technical problems (Bergmann & Sams, 2012). Disadvantages that students may encounter include difficulty online access to the teacher's assigned work or technological flaws that may limit access to assigned material (Saban, 2013). Thus, the major disadvantages seem to be how some students still rely on the old instructional lecture style method to clarify doubts, technical difficulties to

access videos from home, and teachers' lack of skills to set up class material that should be accessed by the students.

Online Flipping

This variation of the flipped classroom method has no face-to-face interaction between teachers and students. E-learning platforms like EDpuzzle and PlayPosit are utilized asynchronously to provide instructional material to students. Students can also respond within these platforms through forums and blogs, recording their responses, in a way that allows them to feel they are having instructional interaction while putting them at the center of their learning (Marshall, 2019). This method is better for high school and post-secondary level students since they need to work independently.

Peer Instruction

Another flipped learning model is Peer Instruction, developed in the early 90's (E. Mazur, 1991). Peer Instruction promotes interactive turn and talk activities, so students can explain to each other important concepts (Love et al., 2014) and practice essential grade skills; it varies from the original flipped model because it has face-to-face interaction with teachers (Marshall, 2019). Peer Instruction may be developed using the Microsoft Teams platform because it provides students with virtual space for group and peer interaction; these elements are considered very important in literacy instruction. Students are also given polls to answer and then return virtually; these can help clarify concepts with support from the teacher and peers (Marshall, 2019).

Additional Tools for Distance Teaching

The Blackboard digital platform is considered an education management system that can ease the development of distance courses. Educators can utilize the Blackboard platform to upload course materials such as videos, PowerPoints, assignments, quizzes, and tests. Course content is accessible in a system that is structured and sequenced for the benefit of the

students and educators. Blackboard can also provide spaces to organize group discussions thus enabling teacher and peer interaction (BrandmanCII, 2014).

Microsoft Teams, a communication-based platform, within the Cloud App of Microsoft 365, was introduced in 2016 with tools to facilitate collaboration and communication (Koenigsbauer, 2016) among students and teachers. Microsoft Teams' main objectives are to provide public and private communication through voice and video conferences. Moreover, it offers essential applications such as PowerPoint, OneNote, Word, and Excel, with the added advantage that these can be modified to access common everyday tasks. The education section of Microsoft Teams holds a variety of educational apps for users of the flipped classroom method. Some of these apps are Flip Grid, in which students can record short videos and respond to questions interacting with peers and teachers. Other interactive apps are Kahoot, Survey Monkey, Pear Deck, and Nearpod. Finally, Microsoft Teams provides users security since personal data is kept private and conforms to its strict regulations (Koenigsbauer, 2016).

Studies in ESL Flipped and Reading Instruction

A study developed in Taiwan explored high school students' responses to a 12-week flipped classroom intervention regarding reading comprehension, and information communication and technology (ICT) in their English class (Huang & Hong, 2016). An experimental group (EG) of 40-10th graders received the flipped English intervention while a group of 37-10th graders did not receive the intervention and were used as the comparison group (CG). The flipped class group participated in warm-up discussions using videos related to reading strategies and answering video-related questions. Students worked on reading passages in small groups to develop their reading comprehension and fluency. They were also allowed to interact asking questions and discussing the given material, while videos and reading activities were assigned for the following day (Huang & Hong, 2016).

37

A mixed method was used as it allowed the researcher to collect the necessary quantitative and qualitative data during the whole semester. Instruments consisted of a pre and post-test and an English reading comprehension questionnaire. The questionnaire was divided into three sections: Students' demographics, ICT, and reading comprehension tests. Post-tests of the experimental and control group were compared to see which group got better results (Huang & Hong, 2016). T-tests were administered and examined to see differences in ICT and reading comprehension effects in the EG. Results showed that students in the experimental group noticeably improved their reading comprehension and ICT skills. English teachers' time restrictions and program pressure were some limitations encountered in the study.

A study by Kazakoff, Macaruso, and Hook (2018) studied a second language learning approach in reading instruction utilizing a program called Lexia Reading Core5. The study aimed to discover the advantages of implementing a blended learning method to address reading in K-5 students. The efficiency of a blended learning implementation in a reading course was studied through a quasi-experimental design for a whole year. English language learners and non-English language learners reading improvement was studied for a year and assessed through Aims Web, a standardized reading screener.

Assessments, individualized learning, and diverse written materials were planned through clear objectives to improve students' reading skills in the areas of vocabulary, phonological awareness, and phonics (Kazakoff, Macaruso, & Hook, 2018). The technological part was worked in class through rotation stations (Christensen et al., 2013; Marshall, 2017; Prescott et al., 2018) where students worked on skills that were essential for them however, students that needed additional work were pulled out by a tutor for what they called a Lexia Lesson that allowed them to receive individual assistance.

Results showed that second language learners and non-second language learners reached satisfactory levels of reading comprehension. Blended learning's main goal is to

support educators through technology and individualized learning (Christensen et al., 2013). Face-to-face instruction plus online activities give students the option to regulate their learning since they can control when and where they review the assigned lessons. The lack of a control group and the inconsistency in the number of English learners and non-English learners in schools were some of the limitations in this study.

A similar study developed by Prescott, Bundschuh, Kazakoff, and Macaruso (2018) examined the use of a reading intervention program in a K-5 urban elementary school. The curriculum implementation of Lexia Reading Core5, a program developed by Rosetta Stone, was tested through a diagnostic pre-test and a posttest as required reading assessment. Core5 has online and offline literacy programs such as Reading A to Z, Early Reading Intervention, and Bonnie Clyde with stories that are organized and designed for each level.

Reading skills such as vocabulary, phonological awareness, structural analysis, and automaticity are addressed through analysis of informational texts and literature according to the students' level of comprehension. Students' reading ability was the main variable considered for leveled placement in the program. Most of the students improved their reading but, K to 2nd-grade students showed considerable literacy improvement. In conclusion, even though there is a lack of research on blended learning studies (Sung, 2015), especially at the elementary level, both ESL learners as well as non-English language learners' reading increased in standardized testing. Having the whole school participate in the study was considered a limitation since having a study developed with a blended experimental group and a control group may have given the researchers a way to establish a better comparison. Researchers strongly recommend that studies should focus on the participation of students in both digital elements, online and offline (Prescott et al., 2018).

Another study by Basilaia and Kvavadze (2020) was developed in the State of Georgia. The Coronavirus pandemic caused educational settings to struggle their way

through the spring of 2020. Physiologically, young children are more vulnerable when it comes to respiratory viruses than adults since they are still developing their immune system; therefore, they can easily get the disease and transmit it to other children (Abdulamir & Hafidh, 2020). As a result, schools incorporated distance learning with the help of platforms such as Microsoft Teams, Zoom, Slack, and Edu Page; Google Meet was the main program utilized in the study.

Researchers developed the case study with 950 K-12 private school students, 47 virtual classrooms, and 86 teachers trained on the use of Google Meet and Hangouts (Basilaia & Kvavadze, 2020). Students were given access to Google Meets through a designated email and classroom links were sent through Edu Page, so the system could gather students' information, facilitating formative and summative evaluations. The benefit of utilizing Google Meet was that teachers could collect statistical information regarding students' access from different gadgets such as laptops, tablets, and mobile phones. The program traced one week of class hours spent on desktop screen-sharing by teachers, video broadcasting, audio streaming, and meetings without audio. The results of this study showed a good response from teachers and students. Implications of the study lead to a review and reformulation of old laws, assessments, and online tests as there was no way to prevent plagiarism.

A limitation of this study was that only one private school participated, which is not representative of the whole area or country. Other limitations were the lack of teachers' mastery of teaching methodologies and platforms. Finally, the quality of teaching techniques was not thoroughly explored as the priority was to focus on gathering the week's data (Basilaia & Kvavadze, 2020).

Curricular Design for Online Teaching

Curriculum design variations due to COVID-19 may affect teaching strategies as well as student learning. A sense of instability regarding the non-mastery of digital tools may

produce in educators a sense of unease while adjusting to the new norm of online education. Unexpected upcoming situations may need to be dealt with as they emerge along the process, but several actions might be taken into consideration to help educators in the new curriculum transition (J. Miller, 2020).

Many educators felt very skilled at what they were doing before the appearance of COVID-19. Their mastery levels kept them in their comfort zone until they had to turn to online teaching. Educators needed to reach for resources and peers, building communities of practice that could help them deal with the difficulties that emerged during these new curriculum transitions (J. Miller, 2020). The researcher also mentions that technology should not take the place of teaching, since it is only a mechanism to facilitate the process in this new educational setting. Online platforms such as Zoom, Blackboard, and Microsoft Teams are only that, digital platforms, tools that assist educators in developing the teaching process. Relying on capable peers and mentors may help teachers learn or clarify doubts related to new digital platforms and synchronous or asynchronous teaching strategies. Educators' presence is always more engaging than no presence at all and teacher-student connections should be emphasized while always providing an adequate period for feedback and corrections; these need to be established to avoid having the teachers feel overwhelmed by an excessive workload (J. Miller, 2020).

Ali (2020) mentions how educators utilize digital platforms as repositories, just to have curriculum materials and assessments available to teach online classes, but this should not be the norm since curriculum design and strategies are evolving. The usage of online repositories should be carefully guided, especially during the COVID 19 pandemic (Ali, 2020). What is being used today might need to be updated or changed to a different strategy or approach later.

Curricular designs and course contents have been extremely affected by the change from onsite to online teaching and learning. There are several ways of helping students and

teachers, when modifying curriculum designs during the COVID-19 pandemic. Reimers and Schleicher (2020) stated:

Re-prioritize curriculum goals given the reality that the mechanisms of delivery are disruptive. Define what should be learned during the period of social distancing…Create a website to communicate with teachers, students, and parents about curriculum goals, strategies and suggested activities and additional resources…If an online education strategy is not feasible, develop alternative means of delivery, they could include TV programs, if a partnership with television stations is feasible, podcasts, radio broadcasts, and learning packets either in digital form or on paper. Explore partnerships with community organizations and the private sector to deliver those…Ensure adequate support for the most vulnerable students and families during the implementation of the alternative education plan…Define appropriate mechanisms of student assessment during the exigency…Define appropriate mechanisms for promotion and graduation…Schools should develop a system of communication…and a form of checking-in daily with each student. Perhaps in the form of texts from teachers if parents have access to mobile phones…Develop a communications plan. Map key constituencies, and key messages to support the execution of the education strategy during the exigency and ensure those are effectively communicated through various channels. (p. 5-6)

During the pandemic, curricular alterations should be made that can help the teaching and learning processes continue with ease. Reading curriculums should be rearranged focusing on which are the best strategies that work for each grade and group, viewing individual and group needs and challenges. Minority groups, especially single parents with several children who have little or no access to technology, need to be identified as immediate priorities by educators and stakeholders. Accessibility to modules is

a possible option, but the situation faced by moms who need to work and then come home to study with their children is something that needs to be considered and dealt with.

A sense of frustration is the norm for parents of special education students that do not have technological gadgets and that because of the COVID19 pandemic can no longer have access to essential therapies and classes needed for adequate skills development (Toro, 2020). That is why communication with students, parents, and colleagues is essential in order to increase rapport to establish effective relationships and facilitate communication.

There are benefits and challenges in distance or online teaching, either synchronous or asynchronous. On the one hand, during synchronous teaching virtual connections can fail. This may lead to frustration and disengagement feelings among students. On the other hand, the lack of teacher presence when teaching asynchronously may decrease students' engagement, while at the same time it may increase independent, student-centered learning, making students responsible for their learning.

Research on Teachers' Concerns with Online Teaching

There are few studies regarding K-12 online teaching practices and strategies (Farmer & West, 2019); therefore, within this new pandemic norm and the forced increase in online education, there may be a need to increase research in this area. Online teaching research needs to identify the effects of different levels of ICT competence among teachers and teachers' professional practices that may uncover the factors leading to technological flaws. Teachers must express their concerns regarding their beliefs and opinions of distance reading lessons as it may help identify issues and seek adequate solutions through peer coaching or training. Knowing teachers' digital deficiencies may enlighten and guide administrators in providing specialized support in the areas in need of improvement.

People may infer that traditional reading lessons can easily be converted into online lessons, but as soon as educators make the transition to online instruction, they detect huge differences between the two processes. Some strategies or approaches utilized in one

educational setting might not be useful in the other and vice versa (Watson, Murin, Vashaw, Gemin, & Rapp, 2011). Many activities, assessments, and tests used for reading instruction were developed within traditional lessons, but those same lessons are not suited for online instruction. Through this phenomenological study, the answer to these and many other questions regarding the use of distance reading lessons can be described as participants elaborate their responses concerning their attitudes, beliefs, opinions, and motivations toward the use of distance reading lessons.

An interpretive phenomenological study was developed by Farmer and West (2019) in which seven teachers were interviewed twice. They all worked at an online K-12 school, but their focus was on synchronous teaching. The purpose of the study was for teachers to express their concerns about online teaching and for researchers to interpret the meaning of participants' experiences. Researchers gathered information related to participants' education preparation, work background, and journal entries about their instructional experiences.

Researchers read and analyzed transcripts and journal entries to gather understanding of participants' contexts. Participants' central phrases and meaningful quotes were verified, charted, and organized into topics and sub-topics and relationships among them were established. Responses from the first interview were used to build the second interview and participants received copies of their interviews in case there was any disagreement. Some categories such as Time Management, Teachers' Roles, Grading, Technology, Communication, and Relationships were some of the participants' concerns.

Time Management

Some participants mentioned the importance of developing organizational skills and establishing priorities. Others just pointed to their lack of time to deal with the workload that comes from online teaching. Balancing work time and personal time is very difficult since there seem to be no boundaries as with traditional 8:00-3:00 classes.

Grading

   Regarding teachers' gradings, participants expressed feeling swarmed, when students sent many assignments at the same time and these needed to be corrected as soon as possible. Other teachers got involved in other school activities besides teaching and felt overwhelmed by the excess of work. Some teachers support other teachers through coaching, they frequently had to use personal time, especially late at night to finish schoolwork on time. Experts in the field of teaching recommend not assigning grades, but instead pass/no pass, or just clarifying that grades may be temporary during the pandemic. After schools re-open, course material should be reviewed, and have grades assigned based on students' effort. This temporary grading should be used to avoid lack of fairness and integrity in the current data collection for students' evaluation (Feldman, 2020).

Technology Concerns

   Another aspect discussed by teachers was related to technological concerns. For example, it was unfair for some teachers that the learning management platform had a specific grading system that did not allow teachers to adjust or change it. This made it difficult to assign students personalized grades. Other participants expressed concerns for lost links due to web pages becoming inaccessible after some time; this situation made teachers have to use part of their free time to do research and to fill these content gaps that may not be a good fit for students' needs (Farmer & West, 2019).

Communication

   Another category of concern was communication. Limited communication with parents is the norm in online education. The lack of personal communication keeps parents at a distance with little opportunities to establish in-person interactions beyond text messages and emails. Another participant mentioned that online communication with students was not guaranteed since students sometimes do not even pay attention to teachers; this may affect the instructional support they receive (Farmer & West, 2019).

Relationships

In terms of relationships, online teaching makes it difficult to establish rapport since there is no physical proximity. Facial expressions and body language that may enrich and sustain relationships is mostly missing. These non-verbal expressions are necessary and contribute to developing good relationships. However, participants believe that some students are very comfortable with online teaching and do not miss teachers' in-person interactions.

This phenomenological study allowed researchers to identify several sources of concerns with online education through participants' response patterns regarding their online teaching. Limitations encountered in the study were that only one school was selected, and the school used only one online teaching model. The inclusion of more schools might have yielded more responses and the use of different teaching models of online teaching would have enriched the findings. All the participants in this study had little experience teaching online so researchers believed that it would be interesting to develop a similar study with educators that possess vast experience in distance teaching. Finally, the study lasted only a semester; a longer study may have provided more information about teachers' concerns toward online distance teaching (Farmer & West, 2019).

Designing Online Reading Lessons

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic brick and mortar reading lessons have been transformed into online reading lessons. There are ways to modify reading lessons so they can be taught to K-12 students with the help of technology (Semingson, Owens, & Kerns, 2020). In these difficult times of COVID 19 and with flexible guidelines, reading lessons can be developed. Semingson, et al., (2020) stated:

> The shift to elementary-focused storybook reading and digital writing and ways to
> replicate these practices given remote learning contexts in K-12 and higher
> education…teachers can engage in versatile and flexible virtual storybook… reading

and writing events with elementary or secondary students… use more advanced

techniques with read-aloud, shared reading, and digital writing…Activities can be

structured to support reading and writing development for K-12 learner via distance

learning methods (e.g., a smartphone or video conferencing tool) and use of free

highly engaging digital texts and tools. Best practices during COVID-19 included

supporting technology needs, detailing methods for storybook reading and digital

writing and interaction, curating lists of engaging digital texts, approaches that had a

comprehension and meaning-centered focus and fostering motivation of the

learner(s). (p.85)

Digital spaces can include audiovisual material, in addition to print material, designed

to help students engage in their reading process, reading comprehension, and literacy skills.

Students can access literacy materials synchronously through different technological

platforms such as Zoom, Facetime, Skype, and Teams. Besides, there are literacy platforms

that contain free eBooks such as getepic.com and overdrive.com; these platforms provide

students with independent reading practice during asynchronous access time (Semingson et

al., 2020).

Teachers should encourage students to select their readings based on their reading

preferences. This will make students enjoy literacy activities as they read to their peers

through synchronous platforms. Students can also select books they have at home to read

online. Students can practice reading through singing as in karaoke or sing-alongs. Reading

can be practiced as students write funny stories together on Google Docs and share them

with peers and teachers (Semingson et al., 2020).

There are certain factors to take into consideration when it comes to technology

integration. Gilakjani, et al. (2013) mention the importance of considering the "lack of

resources, lack of specific knowledge and skills, institutional structures, teacher attitudes

and beliefs toward technology, and types of assessment and subject culture" (p.52) as

variables that influence educators' views, attitudes, beliefs, and motivations (Hew & Brush, 2007). All variables need to be addressed to provide the ideal setting for distance learning implementation, always considering that technology evolution is constant, so educators are against the clock adjusting to this new normal. School administrators face many challenges in this unprecedented year of 2020, a year marked by a pandemic, forcing the implementation of distance learning. Good relationships are built through face-to-face interactions therefore, distance teaching should be developed with collaboration, cooperation, and empathy toward educators as they attempt to reach the required expectations.

Closing Comments

The COVID 19 pandemic has altered educational patterns, transitioning to an online educational system in a very short time. K-12 teachers have transformed their face-to-face teaching into distance learning formats causing their perceptions of the process to also change with little to no time available to make solid adjustments. The transition from face-to-face, to online education, is a long-term, complicated process in which teachers need to build meaningful learning environments for their students; often in spite of limitations such as teachers' lack of expertise in the field of online teaching or students' limited access to technology.

Educators need to be facilitators for students and parents, but it is essential to discover teachers' perceptions of their transition to distance learning. Teachers' motivations, attitudes, beliefs, and opinions reflect their life experiences as educators. Many theorists agree on the importance for educational systems to provide teachers with more and better professional development, that is goal-directed, focusing on collaboration with peers, practice-based, and long-term with followed up interventions (Paesani, 2020).

Face to face and online or distance learning have their advantages and disadvantages. The advantages of face-to-face learning may have to do with the fact that

learning is more interpersonal and gives educators opportunities to get to know students. As the semester moves along, teachers and students get to know each other and establish communication threads. That may guide teachers to modify their instruction and adapt it to their students' needs, especially when working with students that have a disability or an illness. Disadvantages of face-to-face learning may be related to students not being able to participate in class when sick or other circumstances affecting their attendance to school, although the same can happen during synchronous online learning.

The advantages of distance learning may be related to students' accessibility to class contents. They can watch assigned videos or presentations and complete assessments from anywhere and at their convenience. Teachers and students can connect, accessing through web platforms 24/7. Distance learning is also cost-effective as assessments and tests are offered digitally.

Disadvantages of online learning may be related to the lack of time management skills so necessary to complete schoolwork on time. Another drawback is the limited feedback offered by teachers. There are few opportunities to express verbal encouragements in online classes; these are essential for student motivation and to give a boost to students' confidence, especially with reluctant readers. The curriculum needs to be adjusted since classroom textbooks alone may not address students' needs. Teaching reading to second language learners should include differentiated class course material that can motivate students to read and an ample selection of relevant reading material; these tasks are quite time-consuming.

Online learning, either synchronous or asynchronous, is here to stay. Teachers need to express their perspectives toward these models of distance learning. Viewing educators' perceptions of online learning and understanding and acknowledging their attitudes, beliefs, and opinions; and what they consider are benefits and challenges of teaching distance reading lessons will enrich and enhance the teaching-learning processes. This

transcendental study provided the researcher an opportunity to focus on capturing the essence of the phenomena that arise as educators teach distance reading lessons. A description of participants' experiences was developed utilizing the elements of intentionality, epoché, bracketing, reduction, noema, noesis, and horizonalization within the Moustakas' Philosophy. Participants' experiences were described in a manner of excluding the researcher's' judgements providing for a clear view of all the possible angles of the phenomena (Peoples, 2020).

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

Chapter three presents the research methods design and its rationale, the process of selecting participants along with the research procedures. A thorough explanation of why a phenomenological methodology was the best option for this study was also presented. The instruments that were used are discussed along with an explanation on why they were appropriate to answer the research questions. Reliability and validity were described as necessary qualities for this qualitative research design and instruments.

Research Rationale

A philosophical belief should be established when developing a phenomenology. The objective reality and the individual experience of participants was sought out because these experiences are deliberate and targeted toward an object (Creswell, 2007). The phenomenological method can be summarized in four steps (Giorgi & Giorgi, 2011). The researcher interviewed the selected participants in order to capture their perceptions of lived experiences regarding the phenomena. Nevertheless, putting aside or bracketing pre-judgments in the interview process can sometimes be a challenge (Moustakas, 1994a). A second interview can be needed to be done if there were gaps in participants' responses. Moustakas (1994d) states that the researcher will ask the participants the main questions referring to their experiences and their specific contexts. In this study, these questions addressed participants' experiences in terms of implementing distance reading lessons in times of the COVID-19 pandemic and the contexts or situations that typically influenced or affected their teaching.

The purpose of this phenomenological research was to capture the life experiences of K-12 English teachers' perceptions of their use of distance teaching of reading lessons due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The questions that guided this research were: How do ESL teachers from a K-12 private school describe their lived experiences implementing distance reading lessons in times of the COVID 19 pandemic? What are ESL teachers' perceptions on the use of distance reading lessons in times of the COVID 19 pandemic? The following

sub-questions serve to expand the information regarding teachers' perceptions of distance reading lessons: What are teachers' attitudes on the use of distance reading lessons? What are teachers' beliefs on the use of distance reading lessons? What are teachers' opinions on the use of distance reading lessons? What necessary resources do ESL teachers perceive as important for successful implementation of distance reading lessons in times of the COVID 19 pandemic? What benefits, if any, do K-12 ESL private school teachers describe from implementing distance reading lessons in times of the COVID 19 pandemic? What challenges, if any, do K-12 private ESL teachers describe from implementing distance reading lessons in times of the COVID 19 pandemic?

Research Design

A transcendental phenomenology was the most effective qualitative research design to develop this study because it focused on the similarities among several participants' life experiences regarding a phenomenon (Peoples, 2020). Phenomenological research may help answer the research questions since it addresses participants' lived experiences, especially their attitudes, beliefs, views, and motivations which may influence their perceptions of distance reading lessons. For Husserl, as described in Lucca and Berrios (2013), a descriptive phenomenology leads the researcher to a more subjective experience, mainly by listening to the participants' voices.

A narrative study would not be an adequate method for this research since it focuses on the life experiences of only one individual (Creswell, 2007). However, because the researcher gathered information from five participants, it was not considered an appropriate method for the study. A grounded theory study would not be a suitable method for this study because its objective is to create a theory that describes a phenomenon shared by many individuals (McMillan, 2012). The researcher's intention was not to produce a theory based on the examination of the gathered data: thus, grounded theory was not considered to fit this study. An ethnography would not be an option since its focus is usually based on a larger

group of participants within the same culture and how they interact over a long time with the researcher submerged in the process (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The objective was not to pursue a large group of participants or to be immersed in the research because preconceived judgments needed to be bracketed to reach the pure essence of the phenomenon.

This qualitative research design was used to describe English teachers' implementation of distance reading lessons in a K-12 private school context in southwestern Puerto Rico. A qualitative design can help gain access to participants' oral expressions regarding their particular situations and contexts to end up with a comprehensive view of the phenomenon (Lucca & Berríos, 2009). The transcendental approach is a qualitative design based on human perceptions of reality as opposed to the interpretative approach that focuses on individual-world relationships (Lucca & Berrios, 2013).

The textural or noematic aspect refers to the participants' perceived meaning in other words it is what they are thinking about, not the real physical material. The structural or noetic part refers to the intentional experience (Moustakas, 1994e). Moustakas (1994c) explains Husserl's example of how fluctuations may occur as an individual perceives an object. For example, a person may observe a tree for an instance but later change the vision to a man, depending on personal and contrasting suggestions (Husserl, 1931). Personal perceptions can be affected by multiple suggestions depending on the individual's observational viewpoint, beliefs, or attitudes (Moustakas, 1994c).

Participants

The participants in this phenomenological study were teachers from a private/bilingual school from the southwestern Puerto Rico and went through various teaching fluctuations because of the COVID 19 pandemic. Participants taught English at elementary, intermediate, or high school levels. Teachers from K-12 used Zoom as their teaching platform. A proper sample size for a phenomenology is 3 to 15 participants

(Creswell & Poth, 2018). The sample consisted of five participants selected through snowball sampling. Snowball sampling requires the researcher to identify individuals that fit the researchers' requirements and can contact and recruit other participants until the desired number of participants are attained (Gay et.al, 2012). These similarities provide greater insight into the phenomenon (Brown, 2012; Creswell, 2012) of teaching distance reading lessons. Participants' varied perspectives as well as their shared experiences contributed to the body of knowledge (Smith, 2018) regarding teachers' distance teaching of reading lessons.

The participants were initially contacted through their school director and later by phone or email to explain the study's details and rationale, and to deliver the informed consent documents. Interviews were scheduled after participants accepted to take part in the study and after signing and returning the consents.

Data Collection

This study was focused on teachers' perspectives of distance reading lessons in times in which teaching face-to-face had become impossible due to the pandemic. In this study, data collection techniques such as individual interviews in audio format and a focus group interview in audio and video format, were used and these allowed the researcher to capture the essence of participants' experiences (Smith, 2018) as they taught distance reading lessons in times of the COVID 19 pandemic. Individual interviews, and the focus group interview were done virtually using Google Meet since this platform possesses the security requirements for the process of collecting the data as established by the Institutional Committee for the Protection of Human Participants in Research (CIPSHI, for its Spanish acronym). Table 2 presents each research question aligned to the corresponding instruments, the type of instrument, and the instruments' purpose.

Table 3.1
Research Questions, Instruments, and Purpose

Phenomenology Question	Instrument	Type of Instrument and Purpose
1) How do ESL teachers from a K-12 private school describe their lived experiences implementing distance reading lessons in times of the COVID 19 pandemic?	Interviews / Focus Group	Qualitative/ Describe teachers' lived experiences on their implementation of distance reading lessons.
2) What are ESL teachers' perceptions on the use of distance reading lessons in times of the COVID 19 pandemic?	Interviews / Focus Group	Qualitative/Gather information of teachers' perceptions on the use of distance reading lessons.
3) What are teachers' attitudes on the use of distance reading lessons?	Interviews / Focus Group	Qualitative /Gather information of teachers' attitudes on the use of distance reading lessons.
4) What are teachers' beliefs on the use of distance reading lessons?	Interviews / Focus Group	Quantitative/Gather information of teachers' beliefs on the use of distance reading lessons.
5) What are teachers' opinions on the use of distance reading lessons	Interviews / Focus Group	Qualitative/Gather information related to teachers' opinions on the use of distance reading lessons.
6) What necessary resources do ESL teachers perceive as important for successful implementation of distance reading lessons in times of the COVID 19 pandemic?	Interviews / Focus Group	Qualitative/Gather information on teachers' necessary resources for implementing distance reading lessons.
7) What benefits, if any, do K-12 ESL private school teachers describe from implementing distance reading lessons in times of the COVID 19 pandemic?	Interviews / Focus Group	Qualitative/Gather information on teachers' benefits of implementing distance reading lessons.
8) What challenges, if any, do K-12 private ESL teachers describe from implementing distance reading lessons in times of the COVID 19 pandemic?	Interviews / Focus Group	Qualitative/Gather information on teachers' challenges of implementing distance reading lessons.

The process of triangulation was ensured by utilizing instruments such as interviews, focus group interviews, and document reviews as sources of information (Ríos, 2017; Sexto, 2015) and provided validity to the research study. Two or more instruments may yield data related to the same phenomenon (Creswell, 2012), contribute to the same objectives (Yazan, 2015), and review the gathered information (Gay, Mills, & Airasian, 2012). Data was collected from five private school teachers who had taught reading lessons using distance teaching. For this study, each of the participants was asked to provide a copy of their reading lesson plan to acquire relevant information regarding lesson objectives, materials, activities, and assessments that helped validate the data gathered in the interviews and focus group (Brown, 2012) and contributed to the triangulation process. The information collected on participants reading lesson plans were ultimately not used in the data analysis but did provide important background information to the researcher in understanding how teachers prepared their classes.

Semi-structured Interviews

Through semi-structured virtual interviews, participants offered essential information regarding demographics, teaching experience, perceptions, attitudes, beliefs, and opinions as they talked about their lived experiences toward distance teaching of reading lessons. Each semi-structured interview lasted approximately 30 to 40 minutes. Semi-structured questions that were pertinent to the original research questions were presented to the participants, leading them to express aspects that were significant to them, while capturing meaningful details pertinent to the study (Peoples, 2020) and incorporating flexibility into the process of data collection (Brown, 2012). Interviews included questions related to teachers' backgrounds and education, perspectives on their lived experiences concerning attitudes, beliefs, and opinions about distance teaching of reading lessons in times of the COVID-19 pandemic in Puerto Rico. Essential questions are directly related and articulated from the literature gathered (Irizarry, 2019), pertinent to the phenomenon and helped answer the

research questions. Field notes or research notes were collected by the researcher during the semi-structured interviews as these also served to identify any unexpected incidents (Johnson, 2019) and gather essential data regarding teachers' perceptions, attitudes, beliefs, and opinions. The data collected through interview questions and field notes helped the researcher in the elaboration of the focus group questions.

Guide questions for the individual interviews are illustrated in Table 3 and were distributed and grouped into four different areas: participants' background and education, beliefs, opinions, and attitudes

Table 3.2
Themes and Semi-Structured Guide Questions for Individual Interviews

Themes	Questions
Background and Education	1. What is your education? 2. How many years of teaching experience do you have? 3. What grade(s) do you teach? 4. What other experiences have helped you in your actual job as a teacher?
Beliefs	5. Which skills do you believe need more time to be taught, listening, speaking, reading, or writing? Why? 6. How do you develop students' motivation to read online? 7. Which of the following three distance teaching approaches do you believe is the most assertive/practical when teaching distance reading lessons? a) Teaching face to face or remote(synchronous), b) hybrid teaching, or c) online or asynchronous? Explain why? 8. What do you consider are your strengths teaching distance reading lessons? 9. What are your weaknesses teaching distance reading lessons?
Opinions	10. What is your opinion of the transition process from face-to-face to distance teaching? 11. Which digital platforms besides Zoom, Blackboard, or Microsoft Teams, do you think may work best for teaching online reading lessons? Why? 12. How can the English curriculum be re-arranged to improve distance reading lessons for your students? 13. How can English teachers improve their technological skills to teach distance reading lessons? (E.g., Training, communities of practice, peer coaching). 14. What are the benefits if any, of teaching distance reading lessons in times of the COVID-19?

	15. What are the challenges if any, of teaching distance reading lessons in times of the COVID-19? (E.g., time, grading, communication, technological concerns).
	16. What attributes does your lesson plan have that helps you teach distance reading lessons adequately?
Attitudes	17. What is your overall attitude about distance reading lessons?
	18. Recall an online reading lesson you taught. Describe your attitude just as you perceived it.
	19. Describe your best practices, including resources for online distance reading lessons.
Closing	20. Are there any other comments or thoughts that you would like to share?

Focus Group Interviews

In addition to individual virtual interviews, a virtual focus group interview provided valuable information about participants' reflections on the phenomenon as participants shared their teaching perceptions, ideas, experiences, and challenges with their peers. Focus group interviews are seen to have positive effects although they also have drawbacks in qualitative research. Peoples (2020) mentioned how being interviewed in the presence of others can cause some participants to respond differently than when interviewed individually. Interviewees may overstate their expressions, when they disagree or when they feel supported by other participants' expressions in the group. Participants can get aligned with other participants that express similar points of view or assume a cautious behavior toward those who disagree with them.

After transcribing the initial individual interviews and analyzing the researchers' field notes, the researcher created the focus group interview protocol. Questions for the focus group interview are illustrated in Table 3.3 and were based on the data gathered by the researcher on the participants' initial interviews and matching field notes. Researchers' guide questions for the focus group were distributed and grouped according to participants' beliefs, opinions, and attitudes.

Table 3.3
Themes and Guide Questions for Focus Group Interview

Themes	Questions
Beliefs	1. Tell me about your actual curriculum, the "Learn Hybrid" curriculum. How does it work and how has it changed during the pandemic?
	2. Tell me about your recent strategies teaching reading lessons online and why do you believe these have helped you improve your teaching?
	3. Do you believe that going back to normal will make you lose what technology has to offer in terms of distance reading
Opinions	lessons? Please explain why.
	4. How do you develop motivation to read in this distance reading setting?
	5. What would you suggest adding to your "Learn Hybrid" lesson
Attitudes	plan to improve your distance reading lessons?
	6. How has your attitude toward distance teaching of reading lessons changed from when you started distance teaching until today and why?
	7. What attitudes do you believe teachers need, to perform adequately as they teach reading lessons online, and why?
	8. What have been the benefits of teaching distance reading lessons in time of the COVID 19 pandemic?
	9. What have been your challenges of distance reading lessons in
Closing	times of the Covid 19? For example, time, testing, technological concerns, or communication.
	10. Do you have any additional comments that you want to share?

The data descriptions gathered from focus group interviews can be quite different from individual interviews although both instruments can be utilized to compare the data offered by the participants (Peoples, 2020), and can allow the researcher to look at the similarities and differences in the lived experiences and particular circumstances. For this study, a virtual focus group interview was administered, and field notes were gathered after the initial individual virtual interviews as a way to compare participants' descriptions of their lived experiences, attitudes, beliefs, opinions, and perceptions of distance reading lessons. The set of questions utilized in the individual virtual interviews and the questions used in the

virtual focus group interview aided in the triangulation process. The researcher needs to establish a balance between creating rapport with the participants and maintaining a bias-free environment not judging or influencing the participants in any way (Hernandez, Fernandez, & Babtista, 2014). Virtual interviews and virtual focus group interviews can be done through Zoom as it facilitates the transcription of the audio recordings (Anderson, 2020) but carries an additional cost to the researcher. Therefore, Google Meet was used to capture both, the individual interview audios and focus group interview audios.

Creswell and Poth (2018) suggest creating a preliminary pilot procedure or protocol for recording participants' information as this serves as a guide to possible concerns and can be addressed before administering the official interviews. Designing an outline or script with a welcome message, and explanation of the purpose of the interview with some guidelines might ease the interview process (Krueger, 2002). Krueger also suggested asking questions related to attributes or influences, always encouraging the participant to express past experiences instead of future ones.

The individual interviews and focus group interviews were held virtually through Google Meet. A pen name was assigned to each participant which contributed to the confidentiality of the process. Participants' audio recordings were rechecked, transcribed, and stored in an encrypted and secure file that was kept in the researcher's personal computer for analysis (Arnold & Lane, 2011). Only the researcher and the dissertation committee had access to this raw data collected. Figure 3.1 illustrates virtual interviews, a focus group interview, and a reading lesson plan provided by each teacher, as elements that contributed to the triangulation process.
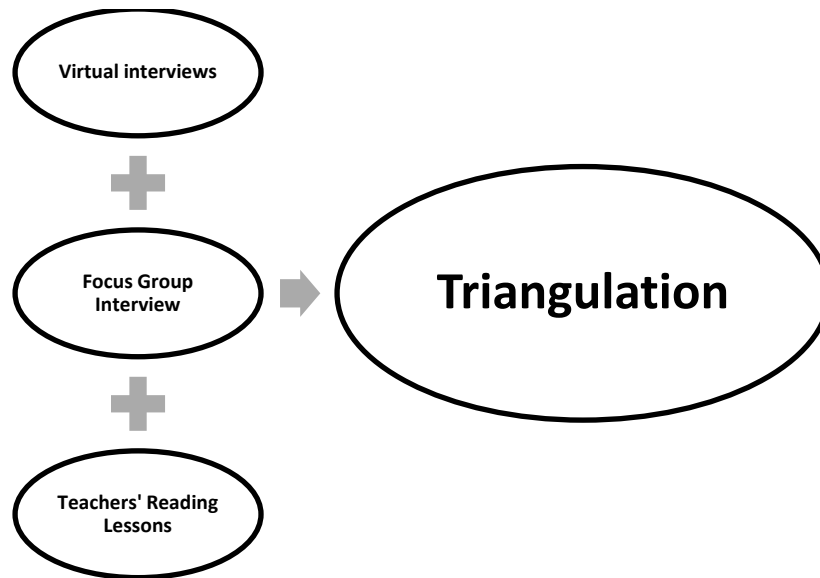
Figure 3.1

Instruments for the Triangulation Process

Reliability and Validity

Reliability and validity go hand in hand as they give solidity to research instruments and qualitative techniques. Reliability is addressed when different researchers can administer the same instruments under similar circumstances and lead their study to yield similar results (Shenton, 2004). Reliability should be verified before the actual development of the research, considering that the instruments' objectives are aligned to the study's research questions. Adjusting equal time frames for explanations and administration of each instrument provided validity to the study as each participant was inquired under the same fair conditions (McMillan, 2012). Validation can also be maintained through the bracketing of preconceived perceptions regarding teaching distance reading lessons (Cilesiz, 2009; Moustakas, 1994a).

In this study, individual interviews and a focus group were carried out; both validated the purpose of the research which was to capture teachers' perceptions of their implementation of distance reading lessons. Merriam (2002) states that "simultaneous data collection and analysis allows the researcher to make adjustments along the way even to

61

the point of redirecting data collection, and to "test" emerging concepts, themes, and categories against subsequent data" (p.14). Merriam also suggests that validity and reliability can be enhanced if the researcher begins the data analysis immediately after employing the first instrument as a way to avoid the overwhelming situation of trying to analyze a huge amount of data or not knowing where to start the analysis. The researcher also asked for teachers' reading lesson plans as part of the validity process because it serves to enhance this process and served as additional data that contributed to the purpose of the research (Merriam, 2002; Smith, 2018).

Data Analysis Techniques

This section explains the qualitative analysis procedure that was used on the data collected through the virtual semi-structured interviews and the virtual focus group interview administered to K-12 public school participants; both were designed to capture the participants' lived experiences, attitudes, beliefs, opinions, and perceptions regarding the implementation of distance reading lessons. The analysis used Moustakas's (1994d) adapted version of Van Kaam's phenomenological data analysis procedure. This method was the most suitable as it allowed for a structured analysis, in which clear step by step instructions led to the essence of participants' perceptions as they talked about their experiences utilizing distance reading lessons. Relevant data attained from participants' responses to semi-structured and focus group questions served to answer the previously mentioned research questions. Moustakas's data analysis method involved several steps that serve as a guide to explore participants' transcriptions.

The first step was listing and preliminary grouping. At this early stage, the researcher needed to make a list of all the important expressions made by the participants' lived experiences. After participants finished their virtual interviews and virtual focus group interview, transcriptions were made and selected participants' expressions that were pertinent to the phenomenon were identified (Moustakas, 1994d). The second step referred

to the process of reduction and elimination. Through this process, the researcher discerned if the gathered data reflected the participants' experiences and if these could be labeled into themes. Determining the invariant constituents was done by seeking the nonoverlapping and nonrepetitive clustering of data into common topics. Themes that were unclear or not related to the phenomenon were eliminated at this stage. The themes that reflected the participants' responses regarding their attitudes, beliefs, opinions, benefits, and challenges of implementing distance reading lessons represented their horizons or invariant constituents.

Moustakas's third step related to the clustering and thematizing of the invariant constituents. Here similar themes related to the phenomenon, or the invariant constituents were grouped in a list. Structured themes allowed the researcher to have a sharper view of the participants' experiences and helped organize the fourth step. The fourth step was designed to validate the invariant constituents. This was done as the researcher reviewed the themes and transcriptions to verify if they were compatible and explicit. At this point, any discrepancies or incompatibility led the researcher to delete unwanted themes. In the fifth step, the researcher created a textural description of the participant's experiences utilizing the extracted themes and validated invariant constituents. Verbatim samples of their expressions were also included at this stage (Moustakas, 1994d).

A sixth step was reached as the researcher wrote a structural description utilizing the textural descriptions from the previous step along with incorporating imaginative variation. Creswell (as cited in Lucca & Berrios 2013) also recommended Moustakas's imaginative variation as a way of describing how things happened, searching all possible angles of the experiences, and building a description of how the phenomenon was perceived by the participants. The researcher used imaginative variation to convey potential structures regarding participants' physical, space, and time causes, or making connections to self or others which are all universal foundations. The researcher needs to comprehend that the

meanings of essences come from diverse perspectives (Moustakas, 1994a) and depends

on participants' unique situations, conditions, or contexts. This may be accomplished using

the researcher's intuition and assuming the corresponding attitude or epoché, setting aside

pre-judgments (Moustakas, 1994d). The seventh step consisted of writing a textural-

structural description of each participants' essence of experiences, adding the themes and

invariant constituents. At the eighth and final step of the process, a final composite

description of all the participants' essences of experiences was elaborated using the

individual textural-structural descriptions and represented as an entire unit.

After administering the individual interviews and focus group, transcriptions were

processed through the web-based applications *Otter.ai* and *Taguette*. Otter.ai, aided in the

process of transcribing the data giving the researcher options to process interviews in a

Word Document or PDF format, with or without time frames. *Taguette* was useful in

organizing the transcriptions by allowing the researcher to hierarchically create codes and

introduce comments for data analysis. However, the use of any analytical application does

not substitute the researcher, but it can provide a faster, more accurate, and reliable

analysis (Freitas et al., 2017).

Permissions

A phone interview with the school director was carried out. The principal agreed to

have the school participate in the study after asking some questions related to the study's

purpose and methodology. An authorization letter (see Appendix A) was sent to the school

director requesting his written approval. This letter was signed before contact was made

with the participants to be included in the study. Participants were sent an Informed Consent

letter (see Appendix B) via email. Participants agreed to take part in the study, so they were

asked to sign the informed consent and return it. Authorization to carry out the study was

requested to the Institutional Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects in Research

(CIPSHI) (see Appendix C). A copy of the researcher's Collaborative Institutional Training

Initiative Certification (CITI) was also included (see Appendix D).

Ethical Considerations

Clarifications concerning interview protocols were completed through email or phone

communications before scheduling time, dates, and platforms to be utilized during the

interviews. Through informed consent, the researcher notified participants of possible risks

such as mental tiredness or discomfort as they answered some questions. They had the

option to answer or decline to answer the questions or even stop their participation at any

time during the interviews. Participants were advised of focus group protocols as there could

be concerns about responses being shared among all participants (Peoples, 2020).

Participants were assigned pseudonyms to protect their identity, to provide confidentiality

during the process, and were also notified that their participation would be voluntary. Data

was stored in a password-protected computer, accessed only by the researcher and any

member of the dissertation committee.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

Introduction

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore teachers' lived experiences and perceptions of distance reading lessons in times of the COVID 19. This chapter includes the findings that emerged from the data collection techniques utilized: semi-structured interviews, a focus group interview, and a review of documents such as teachers' plans with the purpose of describing participants' experiences, beliefs, attitudes, resources, benefits, and challenges in the field of distance teaching of reading lessons. The participants consisted of five private school teachers from a bilingual school in the southwestern region of Puerto Rico. A pseudonym was assigned to each participant and to their school in order to safeguard confidentiality.

Fernandez and Baptista (2010) stated the importance of triangulation, through interviews, focus groups, and review of documents as ways to verify the accuracy of different data sets and to help answer the research questions. Through this phenomenological study, exploring tendencies and patterns of teachers' perceptions generated important information on the field of distance teaching of reading lessons. The findings were divided according to the following research sub questions:

What are teachers' beliefs on the use of distance reading lessons?

What are teachers' opinions on the use of distance reading lessons?

What are teachers' attitudes on the use of distance reading lessons?

What necessary resources do ESL teachers perceive as important for the successful implementation of distance reading lessons in times of the COVID 19 pandemic?

What benefits, if any, do K-12 ESL private school teachers describe from implementing distance reading lessons in times of the COVID 19 pandemic?

66

What challenges, if any, do K-12 private ESL teachers describe from implementing distance reading lessons in times of the COVID 19 pandemic?

These questions were derived from two main questions and object of the study: How do ESL teachers from a K-12 private school describe their lived experiences implementing distance reading lessons in times of the COVID 19 pandemic?

What are ESL teachers' perceptions on the use of distance reading lessons in times of the COVID 19 pandemic?

Teachers' Profiles

In this section, the participants' demographic information is presented. Table 4.1 presents a summary of participants' profiles including gender, teaching position and grade level, years of teaching, and academic preparation. Participants' teaching experience ranged from 2 ½ to 22 years.

Table 4.1
Participants' Demographics

Pseudonym	Gender	Degree	University	Years of Experience	Grades	Previous Experience that Helped in Actual Job
Amy	Female	BA Elementary English Education/ Minor in Secondary Education	Inter American University Of San German	6 Years	9th and 10th	President of University's English Club
Betty	Female	Bachelor's in computer sciences	Inter American University Of San German	22 years	2nd through 6th and Pre-K	Cooperative Institution 7 years
Camila	Female	BA Primary and Secondary Education	Inter American University Of San German	2 ½ years	6th through 8th, 11th, and 12th	El Nuevo Día (newspaper)

Debora	Female	BA Degree Secondary Education	Inter American University Of San German	5 years	3rd	Learning Experience from her education
Elaine	Female	BA Degree Psychology/ Elementary Education	Wayne University New Jersey	21 years	Kindergarten, 11th and 12th	Being a Mom

Amy studied elementary English instruction, with a minor in secondary education at the InterAmerican University San German. She has six years of experience in the same school and teaches English to grades fifth to tenth, but only teaches literacy to grades ninth and tenth. Amy expressed that a role that really helped her in her actual job as a teacher was being president of an English club. They developed activities such as going to the library and writing with younger students.

Betty studied a bachelor's in computer sciences at Inter American University San German. She initiated her career working at a cooperative institution, teaching adults. After 7 years Betty completed her academic preparation in education and began teaching children. She has a total of 22 years of experience and has been teaching English in grades 2 through 6 in addition to kindergarten, which she really loves.

Similar to Amy and Betty, Camila studied at Inter American University San German where she majored in primary and secondary education. With two and a half years of experience she was the least experienced of the participants. Over these past two and a half years, she has been teaching English to grades 5th to 8th but teaches reading to grades 11th and 12th. Before becoming a teacher, she worked with El Nuevo Día newspaper, dealing with the public, delivering newspapers, and collecting payments. She also worked at a theater for two years. Camila considers that working at a local newspaper

and a theater helped her overcome her shyness and develop public speaking skills that are so necessary in her job as a teacher.

Deborah has a degree in special education from the Inter American University San German. She has five years of experience and has always taught 3rd grade. Debora has successfully applied the skills acquired in her Special Education courses to her current teaching.

Elaine the fifth participant, studied Psychology and acquired a certification in elementary education from Wayne University in New Jersey. She has worked for 17 years in the school and has 21 years of experience. She teaches kindergarten, and 11th and 12th grade English grammar and composition. She describes how being a mom has helped her view her students more as her children which has also made her teaching more flexible.

The presentation of results will consist of a discussion of themes that were extracted from the data and arranged to answer the research questions. A summary of the findings will be presented at the end of the chapter.

Categories

For analysis purposes, findings were coded following Moustakas's data analysis method. This method required several steps and provided a guide to explore participants' transcriptions. These steps were listing and preliminary grouping, reduction and elimination, clustering and thematizing, validating the invariant constituents, deleting unwanted themes, textural description, structural description, and ending with a textural-structural description of all the participants' essences of experiences as an entire unit. The use of individual interviews, a focus group, and a review of documents such as teachers' lesson plans provided valuable data to facilitate an understanding of the phenomenon of distance teaching of reading lessons. Narrative descriptions and ad verbatim quotes were gathered from the interviews to attain conclusions and implications in Chapter 5.

Teachers' Beliefs on the Use of Teaching Reading Through Distance Learning

The first interview questions looked to understand teachers' beliefs on the use of distance reading lessons. Their statements guided this research toward the elaboration of the following categories: Teaching priorities, approaches, and strengths and weaknesses in the field of distance reading lessons in times of the COVID 19 pandemic in Puerto Rico.

Teaching Face to Face, Hybrid, or Online

All five teachers expressed their preference to teach online-synchronously, as this approach provided teachers a way of transmitting knowledge in a more practical and assertive way. Online-synchronous instruction also allowed teachers to provide students the necessary feedback to keep students engaged in their reading lessons. Participants agreed on adapting successful face-to-face teaching strategies such as reading scripts and integrating music into their distance lessons to help identify students' reading difficulties promptly.

Camila in her interview was the only teacher who referred to the hybrid instruction offered by their institution, particularly the one performed totally online, as unsuccessful in terms of how students were not learning reading skills appropriately. She emphasized how a totally asynchronous-online approach for teaching reading did not promote student engagement; on the contrary, students seemed lost and showed limited reading comprehension. However, she did agree with all the other participants that the best option for distance reading lessons were those developed using the face-to-face [synchronous] approach.

Amy expressed her preference to teach online or synchronously, utilizing the available technological platforms. "I really enjoy keeping the same structure or as close to the same structure of teaching in a classroom by teaching through Zoom" (Amy, II[1]). Similarly, Betty indicated that the online-synchronous modality gives teachers the

---

[1] II Individual Interview

70

opportunity to identify students' learning deficiencies, correct students' mistakes, and give appropriate feedback when necessary. Betty stated:

[During] synchronous [teaching] you get the reaction of the student at the moment. They interact, right there at the time that you're transmitting your message, so they are able to react back… to see if they really are understanding the concepts. (Betty, II)

Like Betty, Camila also preferred teaching online-synchronously as she considered it the most similar approach to having students in the classroom. During reading lessons students can listen to her as she reads and models the correct way to pronounce the words. In addition to this she can correct students as they read and can clarify doubts along the way.

Elaine also mentioned the importance of offering students immediate feedback which would not be possible through asynchronous teaching. Based on her experience teaching reading to kindergarten students, she has realized that they require quick feedback during synchronous reading so they can truly benefit from the activities and assessments.

Surprisingly, it was during the interview with Debora, who was the fourth participant, that significant information regarding the type of curriculum utilized in their bilingual school emerged. During her individual interview, Debora mentioned Learn Hybrid (pseudonym for their school curriculum), as the curriculum utilized in this bilingual school. She defined Learn Hybrid as a Christian curriculum that was developed in Florida in which some students received their education in class, however other students took their classes asynchronously from home. Prior to the COVID 19 pandemic, the placement of students in one of the instructional approaches, wether in-class, or teaching completely online [asynchronously], was decided based on the students' needs and parents' preferences.

Due to the COVID 19 pandemic and to current public policies, administrators had to put a stop to the face-to-face modality, leaving the online-synchronous and the online

71

asynchronous educational approaches as the only options to deliver teachers' lessons. Teachers' opinions were not considered when placing students in one of the instructional options, but it is clearly stated that all teachers preferred a synchronous teaching setting over the asynchronous setting. This was because they considered synchronous reading lessons quite similar to in-class teaching.

Improving the Curriculum of Distance Reading Lessons

As mentioned previously, it was during the interview with Debora, that elements regarding the Learn Hybrid curriculum were highlighted. Debora described Learn Hybrid, as a curriculum created in the state of Florida which offered students the options of face-to-face or online-asynchronous learning. Due to the COVID 19 pandemic, the school's teaching approach changed to online-synchronous and online-asynchronous instruction.

During the focus group interview, Elaine recalled that the Learn Hybrid curriculum came with lesson plans already created for teachers. Educators were not required to plan their lessons since the curriculum came with a set of premade instructional materials that teachers purchased for their classes. However, to comply with their teaching requirements, they had to modify their teaching delivery. Elaine added:

> During this pandemic, we had to lower the pace, because we reduced our time to teach. Tests that would normally have taken the students 40 minutes …are now cut in half so that they can finish it in 20 minutes. We've gone slower than we would normally go during an in-class lesson. (Elaine, FG[2])

Amy indicated that their school curriculum prioritized the teaching of reading in grades 9th and 10th, so the curriculum was modified by offering all class material synchronously, therefore no homework was assigned. The only drawback she encountered was that lessons took more time to be delivered. Betty had changed the curriculum to

---

[2] Focus Group Interview

improve her distance reading lessons by organizing students into smaller groups which facilitated instruction. She stated, "I like to do individual readings, or smaller group readings…on Fridays. I group them by three or four, and it's easier for me to read with them. So, it really works" (Betty, II). She further explained that having those reading groups scattered during the day and not limiting group reading to only Fridays, would be even more beneficial for the students.

On the other hand, Camila said that she would not change the curriculum in any way because her students were reading at their level without any problem. Another participant that viewed the actual curriculum as one that needed no further modifications was Debora. She considered the curricular guidelines easy to follow and very user friendly. Similarly, Elaine viewed the curriculum as one that had been very effective, but also realized that time needed to be increased to improve distance reading lessons. She stated:

> The only thing that I would change would be to add more time, especially one on one time. Yes, we do small groups, but the curriculum is very fast paced, which I have given more time for it. But with distance learning, you need even more time than you would need in the classroom. (Elaine, II)

Participants had different opinions in terms of changing the curriculum to improve their distance reading lessons. Some teachers that taught elementary and middle school made minor changes to their lessons regarding time distribution, lesson activities, and organization while other participants that taught elementary, middle, and high school decided that their curriculum needed no major alterations. Teachers decided to do all activities in class as a whole group, which was considered a disadvantage as lessons would take more time to be completed. Organizing reading groups throughout the day and not only Fridays was another teaching goal. All participants agreed on their need of more time to adjust and improve their distance teaching.

Teaching Priorities: Listening, Speaking, Reading, or Writing

Amy, a 9th and 10th grade teacher, expressed that writing required more effort to be taught especially when students get older. Similarly, Camila, a middle and high school teacher, responded that it is important to teach writing because words in English are spelled so differently as opposed to Spanish where most of the words are written as they are pronounced. Amy, who worked at the elementary level viewed reading and writing as the two most important skills that needed to be taught. She believed that reading appropriately involves several aspects such as applying the correct intonation, pauses, and volume, but most important of all, the reader needs to understand what is being read. Writing was considered another of her priorities as it gives the learner the opportunity to develop vocabulary and elaborate connections between sentences and paragraphs. Another participant who taught third grade considered that teaching all four areas; reading, writing, listening, and speaking were all equally important and arranged her teaching based on her students' educational needs.

Elaine, who taught kindergarten and grades 11th and 12th, was the only teacher that expressed that more time should be dedicated to the teaching of reading. In her individual interview, she expressed:

> I personally feel reading one on one, or small group instruction needs to be taught more, whether it's in the classroom or if you're doing virtual online. That's the only way that you can produce fluency, smoothness, and accuracy with the readers and understand if they [are] really getting it. (Elaine, II)

Three participants recalled the teaching of reading as at least one of their priorities and two participants mentioned their focus on the teaching of writing. Nevertheless, one of the participants that expressed that her teaching was focused on writing also acknowledged the importance of teaching reading to younger students. Finally, Elaine, who expressed that reading required more time to teach, preferred small group instruction so students could reach adequate fluency.

74

Teachers' Strengths on Distance Teaching of Reading Lessons

When teaching distance reading lessons, most of the participants focused their efforts on the quality of their teaching content and not the quantity of lessons taught. Their strengths relied on how they utilized time to teach, establishing an adequate pace, and basing their teaching on their students' needs. They used the available curricular and technological resources within flexible time frames to guarantee that all students followed the lessons with comprehension.

Betty expressed that her strengths relied on her passion for teaching and how she inspired her students. She stated:

> I teach them the correct tones. I like to motivate them. I show a lot of enthusiasm. I change my tones, so they can reflect and learn and imitate everything. I like to project [myself] very well when I'm reading so they can catch up, and really get into the topic. (Betty, II)

Although some participants realized that their technological skills to teach reading lessons were not the best, especially at the beginning of the pandemic, they did improve with time and hard work. Participants focused on teaching their reading lessons by adjusting their voice tone, with the help of facial expressions, oral reading activities, managing their time, and most of all, showing a genuine desire to motivate and help their students excel in their reading skills. Participants also attributed their strengths to their organizational capabilities as they arranged small groups for reading instruction, within the Zoom technological platform available to them.

Teachers' Weaknesses on Teaching Distance Reading Lessons

Most participants recalled the unstable internet connection as one of the major weaknesses as they tried to deliver distance reading lessons. Betty also reflected on how trying to keep students focused on the lesson was difficult because of the lack of eye-to-eye

contact. She deliberately asked students questions related to the reading lessons being taught with the main purpose to keep them focused and maintain students' attention. Elaine referred to her difficulty to physically keep students on track as a weakness when teaching distance reading lessons. She pointed out:

> A huge weakness, I would say, would be [the] internet connection…because you have those students that, they can focus on you while you are… with the book in front of them, and you're teaching from a screen, not being able to physically point onto the words for them or redirect them. (Elaine, II)

Camila and Debora's main weakness was giving students feedback. The internet failure caused students to take more time to answer the given questions and assessments, therefore teachers had to learn to hold back on correcting students' work. Sometimes after the internet service resumed Debora stressed that some of her students had already corrected themselves by the time that she was back online. Some of Camila's students never even noticed that the teacher was disconnected and continued to work effortlessly during internet fluctuations.

Teachers' Opinions on the Use of Teaching Reading Through Distance Learning

Teachers had similar opinions regarding the use of distance reading lessons. Some of the categories that emerged through participants' responses were transitioning to distance reading lessons, developing students' motivation to read online, digital platforms for distance reading lessons, improving the curriculum of distance reading lessons, and improving teachers' technological skills.

Transitioning to Distance Reading Lessons

All participants recalled the transition from in-class to online-synchronous teaching, as one initially full of challenges as they tried to learn virtual teaching with the new technologies. However, teachers expressed that as they went through the transition to

virtual teaching, they showed a positive attitude which produced a positive response in students as well. Amy reflected on how her calm personality helped her students feel at ease, smoothing the transition to virtual instruction, and the issues that were present at the beginning of the pandemic became less frequent as time passed.

Betty accepted that her frustration with the transition momentarily affected her physical and emotional health. She felt there was no control over the technological issues that came up constantly. Camila explained her experience transitioning from face-to-face teaching as an unexpected change, without previous notice, although she always kept herself focused on the students' needs. She stated:

I feel like the teachers did so well, in making sure that they didn't fail the kids, that the kids themselves didn't realize that the teachers [were] having a hard time. Monday, the governor said we're closing down and no one [was] allowed to go back to work. So, there was no time to prepare…, it went from teaching every day to go figure it out. (Camila, II)

Elaine pointed out that the major issue with the transition to distance teaching was that there was no such thing as a transition. "In March 2020, when we were thrown at [distance teaching], there was no sign that it was coming" (Elaine, II). On the other hand, by the month of August the process of distance teaching was being handled a little better. Elaine pointed out how they all learned from their prior experiences and mistakes. The previous semester gave them the opportunity to reflect on what they did right and what they did wrong. They had new knowledge and felt the need to be more flexible and adapt their lessons to the new norm, which facilitated their teaching of distance reading lessons.

Teachers dealt with the transition to online-synchronous learning and perceived it as complicated but attainable. The worst scenario for most teachers was at the beginning of the pandemic when teachers and students had to abruptly shift to a distance instructional

77

setting, although with time and effort they managed to minimize their struggle, through an overall positive view that helped them deal with the issues that arose in the process.

Developing Students Motivation to Read Online

All participants agreed on the need to motivate students to read during their distance reading lessons. Amy, for example, motivated students to read online and developed students' comprehension through group discussions and asking questions; these tools ensured the possibility that every single student was participating and engaged in the topic of discussion. During the focus group interview, Amy restated that her priority was to keep students involved by asking them questions to develop an introspection of the story's theme. She did this by asking questions such as, "Has this ever happened to you? or what would you do if this was happening? or how do you think the character's feeling? You can tell that they're enjoying what they're reading" (Amy, FG). Amy talked about how she provided a relaxing environment, so students felt free to participate in class discussions by relating story characters to their personal lives. She considered that having a calm personality made her students feel that they could express their opinions and thoughts, and consequently keep them interested in the reading lessons.

Elaine, who taught small children, mentioned in her focus group interview that she concentrated her attention on offering her students constant positive reinforcement, so they would see reading as a pleasant activity and would be eager to go into the next reading level. She also mentioned the importance of having all the necessary components downloaded onto her computer to have rapid access and keep students engaged in the lesson. She stated, "I have all of my reading books, everything scanned on my computer, so I just share my screen. You can keep them engaged with the words up on your screen" (Elaine, FG). She believed that playing games were essential activities that made students engage in her reading lessons. Teachers like Betty went a step further in her interest to

capture students' attention, utilizing disguises, or dressing up to personalize story characters and dramatizing scenes from the story to keep students engaged in her reading lessons.

Debora talked about her strategies when developing students' motivation to read a novel online. She explained:

This is the first time that they engage in a novel, like the whole book is one story. So, I like to start with a review of what we read the day before. I like asking them questions, [for example] What do you think is going to happen now? They give me their opinions on what they think is going to happen. They want to know if their guess was right. So that's how I make it fun for them. (Debora, II)

On the other hand, Camila, who taught intermediate and high school students, said that students from lower-level grades are easier to motivate compared to older students. She pointed out:

The younger kids are a little bit easier to get their attention, because they're younger, they're already interested in learning. But as they get older, especially in those teen years, they don't care about what you're saying anymore. The only way for you to get them to care in any way, is to talk about them[selves], instead of talking about the story. So, you try to talk about them in a way that relates to the story. (Camila, FG)

Distance reading lessons can turn into uninteresting sessions in which students can easily be distracted and become aloof, especially when reading novels or other long stories. However, many activities that are used in face-to-face classes can be adapted and used virtually and may highly engage students to read. Most teachers showed a positive mindset, which helped them develop activities that fostered student engagement, There was a participant who encountered difficulties to motivate older learners due to their lack of interest to participate in reading lessons. Participants developed activities such as asking questions regarding story elements, predicting outcomes, playing games, inquiring students to relate

79

themselves to story characters, and even personalizing story characters to enhance students' involvement in distance reading lessons.

Digital Platforms for Distance Reading Lessons

Similarities were observed as participants described Zoom as the main instructional platform utilized for the delivery of their distance reading lessons, although they were not limited exclusively to the use of Zoom. Participants were free to use other applications and web pages to complement their teaching. Amy learned to use the Padlet App as it had interesting features that helped students understand story elements such as plot and climax. She sent her students a link to access the app so they could create pin boards and timelines for their reading activities.

Betty admitted that she knew about Microsoft Teams as a great teaching platform, but she would rather use Zoom as it was user friendly and had several elements that eased teaching her reading lessons. She referred to Zoom as having features that allowed her to upload recorded stories and play them so students could practice their reading skills. In addition to this, the breakout rooms within the Zoom platform allowed Betty's students to do group readings, which encouraged students' interaction. Camila also mentioned using videos to help teach students essential aspects about Old and Medieval English through reading lessons. She believed that distance reading lessons had driven teachers to learn about virtual tools and to also rely on technology to develop their instruction. She indicated:

> The best thing that's come out of this situation is that tools that we didn't use as frequently [as] using the computer, video chat, videos on YouTube, Google Forms, [and] extra material from the outside [web], has become so common that when we go back to school, and we're present, we might find ourselves trying to integrate it more and more… because we've got so used to it. (Camila, FG)

During the focus group interview, Betty agreed with Camila on the use of technology in her distance reading class, since it had enhanced her teaching of poetry and had helped

80

students with their reading comprehension skills. Betty expressed that utilizing additional technological resources such as videos and audios being read by someone else, helped students comprehend poetry aspects of rhythm and pacing, and complemented her instruction.

Debora was satisfied working with Zoom as her main teaching platform although she also learned to enhance her lessons by adding PowerPoint presentations. She stated:

Zoom has been working just great. It has a whiteboard that I can write on. I can show my page on the screen. It has pointers [and] stickers. For me, it has everything I need so far. Something that I have included is PowerPoint. In reading class, I create a little story, put pictures, [and] audios with PowerPoint. It really works [and] it makes a difference. (Debora, II)

All participants used Zoom as it was the main digital platform designated by their school board to deliver their distance lessons. Nevertheless, some participants utilized other platforms such as Padlet, YouTube, and Google Docs, to complement their teaching. Participants used Zoom, uploaded stories, images, webpages, and prepared PowerPoint presentations.

Improving Teachers' Technological Skills

All participants agreed on the fact that training and peer coaching were excellent options to improve their technological skills. Amy talked about her initial lack of experience as she tried to learn how to use Zoom as the main teaching platform, and how much she learned about [Zoom] by watching YouTube tutorials. She also mentioned how they learned from each other as peers which made them feel they were part of a team.

Betty emphasized on the use of workshops, training, and peer coaching as ways to improve teachers' technological skills. It was not enough to consider herself a technological person for the purpose of teaching distance reading lessons, but she still felt the need to

have access to adequate training to improve her instructional skills using Zoom. She expressed:

I think we need a lot of training [and] workshops. Even though I do have a background in technology, all these apps are new. Not necessarily because you're a technological person, it means that you are going to know firsthand how to use an application. Personally, I think that as a teacher yourself, [you should] look for options. I did this for myself. I looked for all the tools from Zoom on videos on YouTube. That way I was able to improve. I helped my coworkers [and] my coworkers also helped me. So, we as a community, learn from each other. (Betty, II)

This element of coaching and community came up across the data. For instance, Camila in her II talked about her experience learning how to use Zoom. She referred to peer coaching as what eased the process of learning the components and the use of the Zoom platform. Their success relied on peers' advice and recommendations as they all experimented utilizing the Zoom as a virtual learning system. She further explained that by the time they virtually began teaching the students, all the teachers had mastered Zoom's basic tools. This was achieved thanks to the more experienced teachers since they took the time to teach the less experienced ones.

Similarly, Debora described the process of improving her technological skills through peer coaching. Several sessions were planned by teachers in which they clarified doubts and practiced with all the Zoom components. Teachers met during their free time to practice using all the buttons from the Zoom platform so lecture time would not be affected. Elaine recommended that teachers training should be arranged in smaller groups and divided into several sessions for them to be effective. She considered that peer coaching would have better results if done by teachers that possessed better understanding of the Zoom platform.

Participants were eager to practice peer coaching in which less experienced teachers learned from peers that were more technological. Some teachers preferred training

sessions and others favored' learning by themselves watching videos from YouTube to improve their technological skills. Learning to use Zoom was eased mainly by peers' support and plenty of practice using the platform to improve their distance reading lessons.

Teachers' Attitudes on the Use of Teaching Reading Through Distance Learning

Some participants shared similar experiences while others had different experiences offering relevant information on teachers' attitudes toward teaching distance reading lessons. The following categories emerged: Overall attitude on distance reading lessons, changes on teachers' attitudes, positive attitudes, and recalling an online reading lesson.

Overall attitude toward distance reading lessons

Most participants expressed having a positive attitude toward their distance reading lessons. Amy expressed that her overall attitude regarding distance teaching was very positive, although she did prefer in-person teaching. She viewed distance teaching success not only as a result of her positive attitude but similarly saw it reflected on her students' attitudes as well. Her students' positive reactions during distance lessons gave Amy the feeling that she was on the right track.

Betty agreed that she had an overall positive attitude toward distance teaching, and she constantly motivated her students although she still saw it as a challenge. The most difficult task was keeping her students focused on whatever they were reading. Some students were easily distracted, so work was assigned before class; thus, her students received some prior knowledge of the readings. Betty considered positive reinforcement one of her assets when motivating her students.

Debora showed an overall positive attitude regarding distance teaching. Reading lessons had been successful because the format she used was very similar to face-to-face teaching. Readings and discussions took place just as when her third graders were in-class, though she recognized that the situation might have been different at other grade levels.

83

Elaine also expressed an overall positive attitude to distance teaching of reading lessons. Even though they began teaching a month behind (September), her students had already mastered short vowel sounds. She described having a successful year with her distance teaching; students were learning and showing positive attitudes, even though she realized that other teachers were having issues. She reflected on how her attitudes may have been an influence on how students reacted to distance teaching. She stated:

As educators' part of our job requires flexibility. If we haven't learned to be flexible, teaching online will not be as smooth as it can be. Our attitude will always reflect on our students. If we show negativity about distance learning, our students will also be negative about it. If we're happy and we're positive, and we're always giving them positive reinforcement, the students will in general, be happy and committed [to participate]. (Elaine, II)

In contrast to the expressions made by her colleagues, Camila posited a negative attitude toward the use of distance reading lessons. She described distance teaching of reading lessons as a system that was ineffective and confirmed her preference to teach students one-on-one. She added that distance teaching could be used as a remediated approach for students that may need additional help and could not be physically in class, but not to be used year-round. Her negative beliefs of distance lessons arose from issues that she had confronted such as electricity going out, internet fluctuations, and the malfunctioning of students' devices.

Almost all teachers recalled having a positive attitude regarding their distance teaching of reading lessons. This was done by practicing positive reinforcement to keep students engaged in the lectures. Teachers saw their positive attitudes reflected on their students' positive behavior and academic progress. An opposite view was perceived from one of the participants who encountered obstacles in her teaching, where distance lessons

84

were ineffective, although she admitted that some students could benefit from remediated instruction as an additional resource to traditional in-class meetings.

Changes in Teachers' Attitudes

As teachers and students were introduced to remote instruction, the majority of the participants described a sense of anxiety with the abrupt changes that they would be required to implement. Elaine described this anxiety which ultimately changed as she started August 2020. She recalled:

It was too much. A lot of stress, everything [was] unexpected and then on top of that, you had the parents coming at you. It was just overwhelming. But I think when August came around, I was more prepared for it, I knew what to expect and I set myself up that we're going to have a great year… more positive, because it was expected. We knew where we had to go, and we had some prior knowledge of what was happening. (Elaine, FG)

Amy described herself feeling tense as she began distance reading lessons because she did not know what to expect. Reading lessons were affected by internet interruptions and by students' getting distracted during lessons, but the situation improved with time as students had become more motivated and enthusiastic to participate in class.

On the other hand, Camila was not stressed about parents being present during distance teaching. She expressed:

I had parents sitting right next to the child at the beginning, or in the background listening, and I was like, well, if they want to listen, let them listen. I didn't think of it because in my mind, I was doing everything fine to the best of my ability. (Camila, FG)

The initial transition to online synchronous teaching led participants to feel overwhelmed with all the unforeseen situations they came across. In addition, parents' claims, and teaching concerns put an extra load on educators as they tried to keep their

students focused and engaged on distance reading lessons. Lessons improved in August 2020 as teachers were more prepared to confront the teaching challenges and applied what they had learned from their previous teaching experience at the beginning of the pandemic.

Positive Attitudes

Most teachers mentioned being positive, patient, and flexible as essential attributes to maintain students' engagement in distance reading lessons at all grade levels. Some participants expressed how students showed their need to express themselves. Therefore, teachers offered students the opportunity to share their feelings and experiences during class sessions which contributed to improve their attitudes.

Betty referred to being enthusiastic as a necessary attitude to perform adequately as she taught distance reading lessons. She described herself as a goofy teacher who put negativity aside, which she believed was a helpful attribute for successful virtual instruction. She recalled:

> Teachers should be enthusiastic, not so dry, just give them that enthusiasm, it's really [about] the positive attitude. So, if you're positive…if you're happy…you project that image to them. Well, sometimes I'm not feeling well, and I try [not] to project that" (Betty, FG).

Elaine also agreed with Betty on the importance of teachers' positive attitudes as they teach because these reflect on students' attitudes. Just as when they are in the classroom, when teaching virtually, teachers' positive attitudes reflect on their students' stances; negative attitude will also reflect on them. Therefore, teachers need to be positive, enthusiastic, and happy.

Amy mentioned having patience and a positive behavior as important attitudes that teachers need to develop when teaching distance reading lessons. The issues that had risen during distance teaching were caused by different variables that were many times out of their control. She explained:

86

You just have to be as calm as you can. If you have to explain something a million

times, you'll explain [it] a million times. If their internet went away, and they didn't

hear you. You don't know if maybe they are getting distracted by something else.

These kids are going through a lot too. So [be] as patient as you can be. Sometimes

we get angry at ourselves because a lot of things are happening with us as well.

Maybe we feel like we're not going at the same pace that we should be, or we feel

that maybe we're not being as adequate as we could be. That we could be doing a

better job and we just have to remind ourselves that we are doing the best that we

can. That everything is going to be fine and that the kids are learning. (Amy, FG)

Camila also considered positivity and patience, essential qualities to teach distance

reading lessons. It is important to understand that students are spending their senior year on

an online class in their house. Teachers should consider that students are not socializing or

having physical interactions with their friends; this may affect their attitude and behavior.

Elaine talked about having lots of patience, especially with her kindergarten students.

Sometimes students would ask her a question and then she noticed that students just

wanted her attention; to show her something that they did, totally not related to the reading

lesson.

Betty, who taught PreK and 2nd to 6th grade, acknowledged the importance of letting

students express themselves and communicate their feelings. Another essential attitude that

helps teachers during distance reading lessons is flexibility. Betty assigned show and tell

activities for her students to do in class, but sometimes one or two students were just not

ready when they were called to present. Elaine referred to being flexible, positive, and

patient, as vital attitudes that are required during the teaching of distance reading lessons.

Sometimes lessons cannot be accomplished because students have the urge to

communicate. Students need to interact with each other, therefore it is important to let them

socialize, even though they are not physically together.

Recalling an Online Reading Lesson

All participants talked about at least one of their distance reading lessons and highlighted what they liked or disliked about each one. Debora shared her experience teaching a third-grade distance reading lesson based on a story called Brigetta's Misfortunes. She engaged her students by asking them questions so they could make connections between the characters in the story and their lives. She perceived that her students enjoyed the reading selection since they laughed and made positive comments about the story.

Elaine talked about a lesson she taught to her kindergarten students. She described the transition from short vowel sounds and long vowel sounds such as cap-cake, jack-Jake. It highly satisfied her to know when her students understood the phonological rules and continued their reading without her help. Accomplishing the lessons' objectives inspired her to continue motivating her students so they could reach grade level reading proficiency.

Amy recalled a recent distance reading lesson that she taught based on the poem "The Raven". An in-depth analysis was developed, focusing on schemes, and identifying rhymes with the use of color-coding. Students also worked on the poem's accented syllables and metaphors. She stated:

> I played a dramatic reading [of the poem] to them, so they could hear how it was meant to be read… You don't always get to see a video in class, so they loved that part. It took a few days, but it was a great lesson [and] they enjoyed it. (Amy, II)

Camila talked about her experience teaching plays and poetry to her 11th and 12th grade students. She assigned a character to each student so everyone could participate but if technology failed, it affected the flow of her class. Another issue recalled by Camila was teaching poetry. She concluded that her older students did not like poetry at all because during poetry lessons they opted to remain quiet and showed no motivation to participate in

class, which disappointed Camila. As the internet crashed, class delivery became even worse.

Participants felt free to go into some of the lesson plan activities developed in their distance lessons and how they helped students make connections to story characters, analyze poetry in terms of structure, theme, tone, and figures of speech such as metaphors, similes, etc. Several participants noticed how students were or were not engaged in their reading classes by describing their reactions during their distance reading lessons. Some teachers perceived students' attitudes through their positive comments and their engagement as they actively participated during reading activities, while other students refrained from participating in distance reading lessons. One participant attributed her students' lack of motivation to the fact that they disliked poetry lessons which were part of the eleventh and twelfth grade curriculum.

Resources for Successful Teaching of Distance Reading Lessons

Teachers shared experiences regarding the activities used to facilitate distance teaching of reading lessons. Participants' expressions led to the creation of the category: best practices and resources. Teachers combined curriculum content with additional web-based material to implement distance reading lessons effectively.

Best Practices for Distance Reading Lessons

All participants described their best practices and the resources they used to keep students engaged during distance reading lessons. Amy mentioned that one of her main objectives was to keep an active pace in her lessons. This was done using Padlet, an interactive web application that helped her develop her distance reading lessons. She also complemented her lessons with Google Jam Board since it was an excellent resource where students could share their ideas. She had learned about other online resources as she watched videos on YouTube and integrated them into her distance reading lessons.

Camila mentioned that some of her best practices, during her distance reading lessons besides using Zoom, was bringing elements from other webpages. These helped on grading, assessing students' learning, and developing her distance teaching. Besides the resources offered by their school curriculum, such as the teacher's guide and the students handbook, she selected her own readings, although she always considered what the curriculum suggested. Zoom was used as the main course platform, Google Forms were used to develop tests, and YouTube was used to acquire additional teaching material.

Debora considered Zoom her best resource for teaching reading lessons because the platform allowed her to deliver her instruction in real time. She was able to perceive whenever students did not understand a concept and offered immediate feedback. She also used Quizzes.com to build quizzes and reading assessments. She believed that part of her success besides utilizing all the additional resources that made a difference was having a positive attitude.

Betty's best practices relied on assigning her students some material to read in advance, so students were ready for the lessons. She challenged them by asking comprehension questions to make sure they understood the concepts and were focused on the lesson. Playing audios and small group reading by levels could help offer better support, especially to the low leveled readers. Higher level students were also assigned with lectures adapted to their level of performance.

In agreement with Betty, Elaine also believed that leveled group instruction really worked for distance reading lessons. Her experience on the teaching of reading made her conclude that her reading lessons should remain short, no more than 20 minutes to maintain student engagement. Elaine added that reading stories to students utilizing different voices and tones had helped them improve their reading. She took a step further as she recorded herself. She expressed:

90

I create many phonics and reading lesson videos that I send to parents for additional practice. That's not part of the classwork, that's up to them, it's their choice, if they want to go ahead and play it for their child. I know a lot of our parents are not English speakers…I'll record myself in a Zoom all by myself, I'll teach a lesson, and I'll send it to them, whenever they need practice. (Elaine, II)

Teachers' best practices for delivering their distance reading lessons included keeping a fast pace on their lectures by integrating technology, not only to support their instruction but to facilitate assessment evaluation and grading. The Zoom platform was considered by all teachers an ideal educational platform that allowed them to teach in real time and adapt their curricular lessons. Other best practices were assigning students reading material before class sessions, 20-minute small group instruction, reading to students, and self-recording videos for additional student support.

Lesson Plan Attributes

All participants described their lesson plan as one that had good attributes for their distance reading lessons. Amy used all her lesson plan components plus prepared a synopsis of each lesson at the end of each session. She sent students short summaries of everything discussed in class, making it easier for them to study. Amy compared her lesson summary with a transcript that included students' comments and important concepts discussed in class making it easier so students could retain class concepts and study for tests.

Betty recalled her lesson plan attributes and how they worked to ease distance reading lessons through Zoom. The stories suggested in her lesson plan could be projected through Zoom, to play the audio, and allowed students to write their answers on the screen using the Zoom tools. She used the phonics lesson plan components to record herself into the different chats and send them through email to parents, so they could practice along with their children.

91

During the focus group interview Betty mentioned some resources that she added to her lesson plan to enhance the implementation of distance reading lessons. She recommended activities that were previously developed for face-to-face classes but could be easily adapted to virtual teaching. Role plays, integrating music, and body movements are activities that can motivate all students to read in active and fun ways and may benefit all grade level students. Betty added:

> I integrate role plays. They can dress up, obviously, when it's face to face, they could bring activities and all that. But still, [they] could do activities from home. We can teach them [how] to share them, like project them also. Because they feel more dynamic. For the older kids, there's always a lot more. There's always music. I like to jump around. I don't care if they're bigger than my sixth graders. (Betty, FG)

Camila pointed out that her best lesson plan attributes were the freedom and flexibility to modify reading lessons according to the students' needs. The reading lesson plan subdivided into three main parts: title, reading selection, and discussion. However, the questions were unique to a specific grade and group. Lesson plans could be adapted to different grade levels just by modifying the given questions and discussions.

Debora described her reading lesson plan as one that provides her with a well-organized guide. "My book… has annotations on the sides, on what the teacher could say. How to introduce a new chapter? What are the children supposed to learn? Or what's the theme of that chapter? It's really user friendly" (Debora, II).

Elaine expressed that according to the curriculum, her reading lesson plan was divided into two main parts: Phonics and reading. Phonics was developed with the entire group but reading lessons were done in distinct reading groups. During phonics classes, students learned letters and their sounds as they learned the phonics rules. Each lesson plan came along with specific materials and games that contributed to achieving a successful reading lesson.

92

Participants used their institutional lesson plan although each one added a variety of activities based on their students' needs. Some supplemented their lesson plans with role plays, music, and short summaries; some uploaded the lesson plan videos to Zoom, or adapted them to other grade levels. Lesson plans gave teachers the necessary structure to teach, but at the same time allowed them to make lessons flexible which maximized distance reading lessons' success.

Benefits of the Use of Teaching Reading Through Distance Learning

Participants had very distinct opinions regarding the benefits of distance reading lessons. The category that emerged was benefits of teaching distance reading lessons. Some participants ascribed these benefits to teachers' knowledge of technology, increase of student participation, and parents' awareness.

Benefits of Teaching Distance Reading Lessons

Teachers had different opinions regarding the benefits of distance reading lessons. Amy, for example, related the benefits of teaching distance reading lessons to the teachers' level of technology reliance. She indicated that her school was not very much into technology. Amy decided to buy herself a new projector since her school had only one, and all teachers had to share it. The benefit of buying and learning to use her own equipment helped her in her reading instruction. She enjoyed being able to project images, create a very quick transcript of what was being read, and being able to show her students videos with just a click of a button. Camila also agreed that learning to use the technological platforms and devices as resources were also benefits of distance reading lessons. Amy added that the benefit of using technology as they are doing it now may become a little difficult when they come back to in-class teaching although she will do whatever possible to continue integrating technology.

Betty was the only participant who expressed in her individual interview, that shy students benefited from distance teaching as they managed to participate more in class. She believed that shy students began to participate more in reading lessons because they felt more confident, since they were not surrounded by peers, and did not feel the usual pressure felt during in-class sessions. On the other hand, Debora did not view major benefits to her distance reading lessons. She recalled that her reading lectures had not changed too much and that they were not that different from the previous face-to-face lessons, therefore she did not see the advantages or disadvantages of distance reading lessons.

Elaine attributed the benefits of teaching distance reading lessons as the result of parents' support as they were getting more involved in their children's instruction. When in-class teaching was developed before the pandemic started, parents did not have a detailed view of what their children were doing in class. She stated:

I feel parents are more aware of our jobs as teachers and what goes into teaching reading to a young student. I have a parent who is a professor at the university. She wrote to me, [and] said, I teach adults all day long, but I never realized how much work it is to teach reading, now that I'm sitting with my son and I'm sitting through the classes with him. I just think [parents'] awareness has brought a positive one in my favor. I know [for] other teachers, it [has been] negative, but for me, it has been a positive reaction from parents. (Elaine, II)

Some participants viewed how they learned to use technology resources and instructional platforms as important benefits of teaching distance reading lessons. Shy students seemed to feel free to participate and interact more in distance reading lessons. Parents also became more involved in their children' instructional development during virtual reading classes. Most of the participants perceived numerous benefits, although there was

94

one participant that had a neutral view about the teaching advantages of distance reading lessons.

Challenges on the Use of Teaching Reading Through Distance Learning

Participants had similar experiences involving the use of distance reading lessons. Some of the categories that arose were lack of time and technology issues, challenges on parent/teacher communication, and challenges related to students' evaluations.

Lack of Time and Technology Issues

Most participants recalled the need for more time to maintain students' focus during lectures. Betty talked about how reading lessons required students to read stories but following the story's sequence was scarce as they tended to forget where they were the day before. It was difficult to give all students equal participation on the same day, so reading lessons were usually completed in a week or so.

Similarly, Camila described not having enough time as one of the biggest challenges when teaching distance reading lessons. Developing lessons required more time because students needed to have breaks, to stretch, and eat. Interruptions were frequent as students shared their space with younger or older siblings. These issues, along with internet instabilities, made communication almost impossible.

Elaine mentioned technological issues as her main concern when teaching her distance reading lessons. Some students did not have adequate access to a good internet provider due to their home locations. Another concern expressed by Elaine was the time students spend in front of a computer. Teachers consider detrimental to students' health the long hours they spend in front of a computer, so they arranged their classes to avoid this issue. Elaine pointed out:

> So, we have them log on for a half hour, then they have a break for a half
> hour…That's all the way up through 12th grade…because they need to rest. There

95

are time constraints [but] I'm getting my lessons done [without] all the extras that I used to do in the classroom. (Elaine, II)

Amy mentioned time management issues and technological difficulties as the main challenges of teaching distance reading lessons. She recalled:

Classes were cut down to half an hour and it takes a lot longer to create a complete lesson. Sometimes the internet is bad in the school [and] the kids don't hear me. It freezes; the Zoom [platform] crashes, and all of those things take away time from instruction. (Amy, II)

On the other hand, Debora indicated that time for her had not been significantly affected because her reading lessons had always been 30 to 45 minutes, and that was approximately the amount of time she had for her Zoom lessons. However, she admitted feeling frustrated because of the internet issues, but expressed that teaching reading lessons was not impossible. She always searched for ways to make it work.

Participants manifested several consequences from not having enough time to teach distance reading lessons. Situations that contributed to the lack of students' active participation and obstructed the teaching/learning process were related to bad internet connections, and other interruptions throughout virtual lessons. Yet, there was also a participant that perceived that time was not an issue since she had always delivered her classes in the estimated time allowed in the Zoom platform. Certainly, she also agreed with the other participants that time reduction had affected her instruction, although she always tried to accomplish her teaching objectives.

Parent/Teacher Communication

Participants had different opinions regarding communication between parents and teachers. Betty for example, referred to the initial situation with parents as a stressful challenge during her distance teaching of reading lessons. Meetings with parents were tense because they wanted to be heard and sometimes became very demanding. She

considered that being patient helped ease the coping process that students, parents, and teachers were going through during the transition to synchronous learning.

Another challenge perceived by Betty was the presence of parents during virtual lectures. Initially, she felt concerned about parents sitting right beside their children, listening to everything she had to say during her reading lessons. One of the parents corrected her in the middle of a lesson, which made her feel a little uncomfortable, but she did not react in a negative way. She just accepted the correction and continued her lesson. It was a matter of time for parents to overcome the situation. Gradually, parents got used to her teaching style; they stopped sitting right next to their children through reading lessons and allowed the teaching process to flow the best it could.

On the other hand, Debora had not perceived major communication issues among teachers and parents. She even thought that communication had been enhanced during distance reading lessons. Teacher/parent communication was done through WhatsApp and emails. In agreement with Debora, Elaine also perceived that communication with parents had improved during distance reading lessons. The only disadvantage was that there was no designated time for parents and teachers to communicate. Elaine explained,

> I'm communicating more with my students' parents. However, it can be a challenge, because they are contacting me all hours of the day, [even] on the weekends… I don't always answer them, but they do contact [me]. They have my cell phone number, which normally I don't give out in the school year. So, it has its pros, and it has its cons. (Elaine, II)

Participants had different points of view concerning parent/teacher communication. For some participants, the requests of parents at the beginning of the transition process to online-synchronous teaching, turned into a challenge which required teachers to develop lots of patience. Other participants viewed that communication increased between parents

97

and teachers through WhatsApp and emails though teachers were contacted beyond working hours which troubled some educators.

Challenges on Student Evaluations

Betty referred to time limitations as one of the challenges when evaluating students' reading comprehension skills. Students were required to answer questions and submit responses to her WhatsApp as it was faster than emails. She explained that it was difficult to assign a reading passage for her students, to read within 20 minutes, and answer 10 questions.

Betty was also concerned about parents helping their children during testing. She stated, "you can't really tell if they're doing [a test] on their own. You can't predict if some students receive some help, but you can't really control that" (Betty, II). "I had to struggle with that in the beginning, but then they learned. We got [the] pace of it, and now they let them [answer]. I can see the difference" (Betty, FG).

Oral grading was done but required some scheduling and could take several days to be accomplished. Oral grading was also affected by internet fluctuations because students could not complete the testing sessions, and these needed to be postponed. Similarly, Debora also expressed that unstable internet connections interfered with oral reading tests therefore, she needed to plan additional virtual meetings with her students to complete testing.

Camila described grading as an absurd situation. She sent students the tests so they could answer the questions and send her back their test responses through emails. Nevertheless, she indicated: "If parents are not… going through the emails on a daily basis, then they don't see the emails. Sometimes they do go through [emails] …but they still don't see them because they get emails from all different teachers" (Camila, II). Camila complained about receiving the wrong worksheets even after verifying verbally that students really knew the right answers. She indicated:

98

We can't check their work before they submit it. So, we're there with them on screen, doing the work, reading the story, answering the questions, we answer them together, and then they submit something that has absolutely nothing to do with what we discussed. That would never happen in class, because you can go around every desk and check, see, and make sure that they're doing what they're supposed to be doing. (Camila, FG)

Elaine developed plenty of virtual assessments to prevent the situation of parents helping their children during testing. Parents were sometimes unaware of when these tests or assessments were taking place. She was aware of the issues that came up during formal testing. She stated, "I also do formal evaluations where they have to log on, but there's always that question of "are the parents telling"? (Elaine, II). She went through the unpleasant experience in which some parents would point to the correct answers while she was testing. Some parents did not understand that if the student did not answer correctly, it was totally fine.

Challenges encountered during the testing of reading skills included difficulty with time distribution to test students, and parents providing their children the answers. Frequently, parents and students failed to respond to emails that contained assessments or tests that needed to be answered promptly. Some participants tried to solve the problem by giving oral tests or providing online-synchronous assessments whenever possible without previous notification to parents.

CHAPTER V.

CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative research study was to explore the lived experiences, opinions, and attitudes of private school teachers from grades K to 12, and provide an understanding of their beliefs, views, attitudes, resources, benefits, and challenges on the use of distance reading lessons in times of COVID 19. A better understanding of participants' lived experiences was captured after analyzing the data gathered from the individual semi-structured interviews and the focus group. Participants' responses provided a foundation to reach conclusions and recommendations on the effectiveness of distance reading lessons.

Discussion

The discussion of the findings in this study were based on participants' intentionality or how experiences were perceived by them. Results suggested that only two participants considered that reading needed more time to be taught, pondering that the teaching of reading was the focus of this study. All participants perceived online-synchronous instruction as the most assertive method of distance reading instruction, although the Learn Hybrid curriculum utilized by their private institution provided the options of face-to-face and on-line learning even before the COVID 19 pandemic initiated. Participants expressed what they considered were their teaching strengths such as being patient, slowing down their teaching pace, taking their time to explain the lessons, and showing students the appropriate attitudes by modeling a positive behavior. Being flexible and patient are described in the literature as teachers' ideal behaviors when having to shift to distance teaching (Johnson, 2019). Participants were also conscious of their teaching limitations as they tried to help students, parents, and even themselves adapt to distance teaching. Some teachers' lack of

experience teaching literacy, trying to give students accurate feedback, or setting time delimitations to assess students' work gave teachers a sense of vulnerability that took some time to improve.

The study results revealed that some participants viewed the transition from face-to-face teaching positively, while others perceived the transition as one full of challenges and frustrations. Four participants mentioned the use of questioning, reviewing, and playing games with the help of the Zoom platform as successful activities that kept students engaged in reading. All participants used Zoom as their main teaching platform and most integrated Google Forms, Power Point, and YouTube to supplement and enrich their lectures.

Results exposed how teachers accepted the Learn Hybrid curriculum with all the premade lessons and materials as they emphasized that the curriculum was built to be successful as it was, and no other variations were needed other than additional time to complete the lessons. No teachers considered rearranging the Learn Hybrid curriculum as an option to improve their reading lessons. Participants manifested that they had no need to complement their instructional plans and curriculum with additional elements and described the curricular content as one designed to be flexible and structured which facilitated instruction. Consequently, lessons' flexibility offered teachers the opportunity to incorporate other stories, elaborate reading lesson summaries, and prepare self-recorded lessons through Zoom for the benefit of students, and to assist parents that were not proficient in English. According to some researchers (Ferdig, Baumgartner, Hartshorne, Kaplan-Rakowski, & Mouza, 2020) teachers can adjust their lessons by accommodating them to their students' needs. This may be done by giving them different online and offline options; therefore, students and parents feel encouraged and see learning activities that are relevant to them.

Findings also revealed that teachers had different opinions regarding their overall attitude toward teaching reading lessons. Some participants referred to distance teaching as a positive experience, in which reading lessons had not significantly changed. Most teachers also perceived positive attitudes from students' reactions such as facial expressions and their positive comments during distance lessons. On the other hand, one teacher expressed feeling overwhelmed about distance teaching and referred to it as a type of instruction that did not work for her or her students, specifically due to the technological issues that constantly arose during the transitioning process of in-class to distance teaching. She believed that distance reading lessons were ineffective and not the best option for her students, although she did see distance instruction as a teaching option, especially in particular cases where students urgently need one-on-one support. The findings from this study echo Gilakjani, et al. (2013)'s findings that described how teachers' positive attitudes toward technology can make a difference, providing students with a learning environment that can help them achieve academic success.

Results showed that participants held a positive attitude as they recalled their distance teaching experiences and developed activities that were pertinent to students. Researchers have reported that student engagement can be accomplished if teachers are able to develop their digital skills and use the available resources effectively (Ali, 2019). Hence, teachers focused their efforts on keeping students engaged through questioning and in-depth analysis of stories and poetry that were fun and interactive during their synchronous lessons.

The results in this study showed that all five teachers viewed peer coaching as a vital step to improve their technological skills. Researchers have insisted on providing teachers with the appropriate professional development in remote, in-class, or hybrid educational settings, taking into consideration that content should be personalized and flexible so it can be adapted to their learners' needs (Bailey et al., 2020). Participants were eager to help

other teachers that needed to improve their digital skills and teachers that did not consider themselves technologically savvy, were willing to be helped by their peers as well. Some participants highlighted the importance of training and having multiple session workshops as other options to learn key concepts and skills regarding the use of technology to teach distance reading lessons properly. Some teachers preferred to train themselves watching videos through YouTube or considered searching other options on the web to learn the necessary digital skills to teach distance reading lessons.

This study showed that some participants felt that the benefits of distance teaching depended on teachers' reliance on technology and their determination to digitalize their instruction. Findings from this study are comparable to Hakim (2020)'s findings that describe how most educators that used new technologies for distance teaching showed positive attitudes which eased the teaching process. Some participants perceived how parents became more aware of teachers' workload as another important benefit in the transition to distance teaching. Nevertheless, there was one participant that did not acknowledge any instructional benefits or drawbacks from distance teaching of reading lessons.

Participants were conscious of the limitations and challenges they faced on a daily basis such as limited time, grading, teachers' lack of experience working distance reading lessons, students' behavior, and stress variability. Some teachers felt helpless, overwhelmed, and frustrated with the technological issues that they had to confront regularly. Findings also showed that one teacher acknowledged having a negative attitude toward the use of distance reading lessons and expressed that distance teaching was a totally ineffective teaching approach. However, results were also surprising in that most participants showed a positive attitude and instead directed their efforts toward keeping students motivated through various teaching strategies. These strategies included using positive reinforcement, games, developing group readings, using the Zoom break rooms, using Google Forms, and using YouTube to teach reading lessons effectively. Researchers

have reported that if teachers are offered the opportunity to communicate their teaching concerns to administrators and stakeholders, this may give them a sense of support, so essential during instructional adjustments (Reich et al., 2020). Educational leaders and supervisors can administer surveys to teachers, parents, and students, to identify their emotional, and educational needs that may arise during the transition to distance instruction. This gives educators the opportunity to address emerging issues that may interfere with distance learning of reading lessons. The sooner instructional issues are identified, the faster they can be addressed, and a better learning environment can be established.

Results also revealed how participants confronted several challenges that obstructed adequate instruction of distance lessons. Some participants perceived that in addition to the lack of time to teach and technology concerns, there were also communication difficulties among students, teachers, and parents. Student participation was affected by stress, beside other distractors including domestic disruptions, and parents interfering with their children's testing. Surprisingly, some participants perceived variations on students' behavior during the transition to distance teaching. Some students that used to be active in class became more passive during distance lessons, while other students that were acknowledged for their shy personality became more participative.

On the other hand, results showed that communication with parents improved through digital resources such as emails and WhatsApp. These electronic communication services, along with the Zoom platform, became essential tools for parents, students, and teachers; these tools also facilitated the clarification of doubts and assisted with instructional feedback. However, some teachers felt that there were no communicative boundaries as they were called by parents at any time of the day, night, or even weekends to ask questions or communicate instructional concerns. To enhance adequate communication and collaboration, a flexible guide should be developed that includes various routes of technological communication, so teachers can offer parents support regarding their

104

children's distance reading instruction; this valuable assistance can help parents provide their children with additional support (Reimers & Schleicher, 2020). Final insights of this study captured positive attitudes from participants that were eager to teach distance lessons, facing all the instructional challenges, and utilizing all the available tools to transition to distance teaching successfully.

Conclusions

The participants were K-12 private school teachers from a bilingual school that volunteered to share their perceptions of the process of transitioning to online teaching. Teachers shared their lived experiences as they developed their distance reading lessons thus enabling participants the opportunity to reflect on their own teaching and on their peers' instruction. Appendix G presents a summary of the findings and offers information regarding the study's sub questions and the emerged categories which helped answer the two main questions of this research study: 1) How do ESL teachers from a K-12 private school describe their lived experiences implementing distance reading lessons in times of the COVID-19 pandemic? 2) What are ESL teachers' perceptions on the use of reading lessons in times of the COVID-19 pandemic?

What are teachers' beliefs on the use of distance reading lessons?

The first research question explored participants' teaching preferences concerning face-to-face, hybrid, and online teaching approaches. Teachers expressed that teaching online synchronously was the best option to teach distance reading lessons and described it as a useful way to offer students feedback and clarify doubts when necessary. All teachers believed that their school curriculum, with all the premade lesson plans and flexible content was the ideal curriculum for them. Some minor adjustments to lesson plans consisted of creating reading groups and redistributing time to ease the teaching process.

.

Teachers had different beliefs regarding listening, speaking, reading, and writing as their teaching priorities. Three participants considered that reading was one of their teaching priorities and only one participant identified the teaching of reading as her unique objective. Even though teachers knew that reading is really based on comprehension, some also included as part of teaching reading, emphasizing production, intonation, fluency, and performance.

What are teachers' opinions on the use of distance reading lessons?

The second research question delved into participants' opinions of the transition to distance teaching. Participants perceived the transition as a challenge due mainly to their lack of technological knowledge and internet fluctuations; however, they kept a positive attitude which helped ease the shift to virtual learning. By the month of August 2020, teachers had learned from their mistakes and adapted their lessons to the new norm and could minimize the struggles they went through at the beginning of the pandemic.

Participants shared their opinions of how they developed their students' motivation to read online. Teachers used group discussions, questioning, positive reinforcement, and games to keep students engaged in their reading lessons. There was one participant that viewed how her middle and high school students had very little interest in participating in distance reading lessons despite her efforts to keep them engaged. Participants utilized Zoom as their main teaching platform, along with Google Docs, YouTube, and other web pages to enhance their reading lessons. Most teachers viewed peer coaching and training as the best options to develop their technological skills.

What are teachers' attitudes on the use of distance reading lessons?

The third research question explored participants' attitudes as they taught their distance reading lessons. Participants noted that their positive attitudes reflected on their students, and they mainly attributed it to practicing positive reinforcement. On the other hand, there was one participant who recalled that distance teaching lessons were not

effective although she did highlight that they can be used in some specific occasions. The initial transition to online synchronous teaching led teachers to feel overwhelmed as they could not control the technology issues, parental claims, and teaching concerns. These issues diminished with time as they applied what they had learned from previous experiences. Participants mentioned being flexible, positive, and patient as essential qualities when teaching distance reading lessons. These assets are particularly useful when teaching students that sometimes have the urge to communicate and interact with peers even if they are learning virtually. Participants mentioned using their online reading lessons activities to promote students' engagement through story elements, character traits, and poetry.

What necessary resources do ESL teachers perceive as important for successful implementation of distance reading lessons in times of the COVID 19 pandemic?

The fourth research question aimed to identify successful resources utilized by participants during the implementation of distance reading lessons. Teachers mentioned resources and activities such as keeping a fast pace on their lectures as they used the Zoom teaching platform, small group instruction, reading to students, and self-recording instructional videos as effective because they facilitated instruction. They supplemented their lesson plans with role plays, music, and short summaries, adding structure to their lessons but at the same time making lessons flexible.

What benefits, if any, do K-12 ESL private school teachers describe from implementing distance reading lessons in times of the COVID 19 pandemic?

The fifth research question elicited participants' distinct views about the benefits of implementing distance reading lessons. Some of the benefits were how teachers acquired the latest technological skills. Another benefit perceived by some teachers was that shy students started to participate more in distance reading lessons and parents became more

involved in their children's instruction. All except one participant assumed a neutral position in terms of viewing the benefits of distance reading lessons.

What challenges, if any, do K-12 private ESL teachers describe from implementing distance reading lessons in times of the COVID 19 pandemic?

The sixth research question intended to describe the teaching challenges encountered by teachers during distance reading lessons. Some participants recalled not having enough time to teach and having bad internet connections which really delayed the teaching process. For some participants, communication with parents became a major challenge although other teachers perceived that communication increased between parents and teachers. Another challenge encountered was that during online-synchronous evaluations and testing of reading skills some parents interfered, providing their children with test responses. To diminish the issue of having parents offering answers during tests, some teachers had to change their testing approach and elaborated oral tests.

Implications

The two main questions that guided this transcendental phenomenological research study were: How do ESL teachers from a K-12 private school describe their lived experiences implementing distance reading lessons in times of COVID-19 pandemic? What are ESL teachers' perceptions on the use of reading lessons in times of the COVID-19 pandemic? All the participants' responses and statements provided valuable insights to answer these questions. The information provided by the five teachers through the individual interviews and the focus group, led me to determine the implications of the use of distance reading lessons.

Participants believed that the Learn Hybrid curriculum was appropriate for teaching distance reading lessons. Nevertheless, teachers decided to make it flexible by adding additional resources and relevant activities like in-depth analysis of stories and poems,

108

lesson summaries, and even self-recording lessons to be used offline to benefit students and parents. It is evident that face-to-face interactions between teachers and students were not the same during distance reading lessons therefore some teachers considered adjusting their lesson plan activities to meet their students' and parents' needs.

Curriculum standards and lesson plan activities should be revisited by stakeholders, supervisors, and teachers as they can collaborate to include activities that can be easily modified to be used either face-to-face or virtually. There are those who argue that teachers' collaboration to develop lesson plans with adaptable online and offline instructional options would benefit students and parents (Ferdig et al., 2020) on the transition to distance teaching. In addition, online reading programs such as Starfall, Learning A to Z, and Book Bites among others, are mentioned in previous literature as resources utilized to support and reinforce students' reading skills. Nevertheless, a thorough analysis of each program or platform should be done to confirm adequate alignment to the updated curriculum and the students' grade level (Reimers, Schleicher, Saavedra, & Tuominen, 2020). Before considering a feasible addition of any reading program or application to the school curriculum, a thorough analysis should be done to evaluate the app costs and available school budget versus the long-lasting benefits that these can add to distance reading lessons. This analysis should also be directed toward the alignment of grade-level reading skills of school curricula and online reading apps to really accomplish the desired benefits.

It is important to highlight that the Learn Hybrid curriculum had daily lessons that teachers paid for, which seemed to be a unique characteristic of that private school. On the other hand, public-school teachers are not required to buy their teaching lessons because public school policies establish that teaching materials are free of charge for teachers and students. Therefore, this implies that public school teachers would not be able to purchase teaching lessons as the teachers from the private school in this study did. Even if the Puerto Rico Department of Education invested in such curricula,

109

adjustments and modifications should still be made by teachers to use lessons online synchronously or asynchronously in case they came across another pandemic.

Teachers perceived how several parents became more aware of their work as educators and offered their children more support in their education. These results were surprising as some parents tended to complain about having to provide support to their children during distance lessons. Research has found that since some parents are also working from home, they consider an extra workload, the task of helping their children with their school activities (Brossard et al., 2020). This, added to the fact that some parents have English language deficiencies and are unable to help their children during their distance reading lessons may also contribute to decrease their disposition to participate in their children's virtual education. However, as participants communicated with parents through the different digital platforms, an increase in parents' positive attitudes and a higher involvement in their children's education were perceived as important benefits that emerged from the transition to distance reading lessons. According to experts, adequate and continuous professional development are essential thus, teachers can become facilitators for parents and students (Paesani, 2020).

Based on the results it could be implied that adequate training can help teachers improve their technological skills, master teaching platforms, and to make sure that they use appropriate instructional methods to teach and assess reading skills successfully. Local district leaders can develop workshops to help educators improve their distance reading lessons. According to Rogers (1983), when new technologies are to be used, adequate training and peer coaching could greatly benefit educators as these produce a positive learning impression on teachers, reducing psychological barriers, as they develop new technological skills particularly to teach reading lessons. Previous literature has also established that educators can increase their self-efficacy and benefit from the process of learning from peers that have succeeded in their teaching goals (Bandura, 1994). Teachers

who have successfully taught literacy virtually can contribute with their knowledge during workshops to help other teachers that have expressed limitations, challenges, or weaknesses throughout their distance lessons.

The lived experiences of distance teaching shared by the five K-12 private school teachers may help future teaching of literacy. Instructional support through different professional development strategies such as training and peer coaching should be a priority to stakeholders and other educational leaders. Teachers that possess higher technological skills can also contribute with their knowledge to review the K to 12 literacy curricula so it can better address students' educational needs. Research has found that teachers that show higher self-efficacy are capable of engaging parents in their children's education (Hoover et.al, 1992). Therefore, parents can be engaged by teachers that are well trained particularly in distance teaching of literacy.

Limitations

Data analysis and interpretation from a phenomenological point of view may vary as participants could have unstated or overemphasized the perceptions of their experiences implementing distance reading lessons. During this qualitative study, participants' openness in their responses to the research questions was expected. Nevertheless, results highly depended on the degree of participants' truthfulness revealing their lived experiences during the semi-structured interviews and focus group interview.

A further limitation was that all participants were English teachers from a private bilingual school that taught distance reading lessons from grades K to 12. Teachers from other subject areas such as Science, Social Studies, and Math were not invited to participate in the study although they did use reading to deliver their course content in English. Teachers from other disciplines could have contributed to this study providing valuable information regarding the similarities and differences of their perceptions to

111

distance teaching. In addition, this is a school where the curriculum is largely in English and therefore not representative of most schools in Puerto Rico, public or private.

Another important limitation was that the sample utilized consisted of a small group of private school educators from the southwestern region of Puerto Rico. Such a limited number of participants did not allow the researcher to generalize results on teachers' perceptions regarding their distance instruction. Developing a study with a greater sample and including schools from other locations in the southern part of Puerto Rico could provide future researchers a better understanding of teachers' perceptions of their distance reading lessons in times of the COVID 19.

The COVID 19 pandemic has caused an unexpected shift in the educational system of Puerto Rico. It is important to recall how rare and different this year has been for teachers, students, and parents regarding distance reading instruction. The fact that everything was different including the delivery of reading lessons, internet access, and teaching expectations made this year an anomaly versus the norm.

Recommendations

There are several recommendations that emerged based on the results of the study. Future studies should be developed by selecting larger samples. These samples should include teachers from other private schools, located in the south part of Puerto Rico, that have been forced to teach their reading lessons virtually because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Results from a larger sample on the use of distance teaching can confirm or refute the findings from this study. In addition, research can also be directed toward students' perceptions by interviewing them regarding their attitudes, beliefs, and opinions on the usefulness of distance reading lessons. Further studies should also be extended to teachers of other subjects such as Social Studies, Science, and Math so they can provide their insights and best practices during distance teaching of reading lessons.

A study of necessities can be developed through the administration of well-designed surveys to students, teachers, and parents to identify emergent issues during distance reading instruction. Identifying possible concerns can help stakeholders, administrators, and supervisors develop a plan to provide teachers adequate support on distance reading instruction. In terms of giving teachers the needed support, stakeholders and administrators can contact qualified professionals that can identify and recommend grade level literacy apps to improve students' reading skills. It is highly recommended that school curriculum and lesson plans should be revised and modified, making them more flexible in terms of instructional time, grading, and assessment of students' work, as this can facilitate adjusting to distance reading instruction. The data results from surveys can also help instructional leaders to elaborate and provide professional development, grade level training, workshops, or peer coaching, as teachers can learn about essential digital tools and teaching techniques to increase their mastery of distance teaching and increase students' reading proficiency. Parents can also benefit from workshops so they can learn appropriate distance learning approaches and help their children improve their reading. Either of these recommendations will bring more information about teachers' perceptions on the teaching of distance reading lessons and their instructional needs.

Concluding Remarks

Through this investigation, a detailed analysis of participants' lived experiences through the description of their beliefs, views, attitudes, was presented. In addition, resources, benefits, and challenges encountered during their online synchronous teaching of reading lessons. Some key implications of this study rely on the fact that face-to-face interactions between teachers and students were quite different during distance reading lessons. Consequently, teachers were required to make their Zoom lessons flexible, by readjusting time and adding feasible activities to address students' and parents' needs.

113

Stakeholders, supervisors, professional developers, and teachers can and should collaborate to include activities in the curriculum that can be easily modified, such as the alignment of grade-level reading skills and online reading apps and used either in face-to-face or virtual environments. Based on the gathered results it can be stated that appropriate peer coaching and training can highly benefit teachers and improve their technological skills and instructional methods when teaching reading lessons synchronously and asynchronously. The importance of these research findings can contribute to current research literature and the field of practice regarding distance teaching of reading lessons.

I recommended that future studies should include the use of larger samples, as well as teachers from other schools, and developing a study of necessities in the form of a survey to capture emerging issues from students, parents, and teachers. Work on effective solutions to improve distance reading lessons is essential. It is my hope that stakeholders, administrators, supervisors, and professional developers will find useful the information gathered in this investigation so as to help improve the future of distance reading lessons.

REFERENCES

Abdulamir, A., & Hafidh, R. (2020). The possible immunological pathways for the variable immunopathogenesis of COVID-19 infections among healthy adults, elderly and children. *Electronic Journal of General Medicine*, *17*(4), 1–4. https://doi.org/10.29333/ejgm/7850

Abdulaziz, R. (2020). Effectiveness of a proposed program in developing practices and modifying beliefs of practitioner teachers about the flipped classroom. *SAGE Open*, *10*(2). https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244020919775

Ali, W. (2019). The efficacy of evolving technology in conceptualizing pedagogy and practice in higher education. *Higher Education Studies*, *9*(2), 81–95. https://doi.org/10.5539/hes.v9n2p81

Ali, W. (2020). Online and remote learning in higher education institutes: A necessity in light of COVID-19 Pandemic. *Higher Education Studies*, *10*(3), 16. https://doi.org/10.5539/hes.v10n3p16

Almoeather, R. (2020). Effectiveness of blackboard and Edmodo in self-regulated learning and educational satisfaction. *Turkish Online Journal of Distance Education*, *21*(2), 126–140. https://doi.org/10.17718/TOJDE.728140

Alnuhayt, S. (2018). Investigating the use of the flipped classroom method in an EFL vocabulary course. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, *9*(2), 236–242.

Anderson, J. (2020). *Perspectives of elementary teachers implementing blended learning while participating in virtual coaching*. Walden University.

Arnold, E., & Lane, S. (2011). Qualitative research in transfusion medicine. *Transfusion Medicine*, *21*(5), 291–300. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1365-3148.2011.01085.x

Bailey, J. P., Hess, F. M., Cerf, C., Conaway, C., Erquiaga, D., Henderson, K., … Robinson, G. (2020). *A blueprint for back to school*. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.com/stable/resrep24606

Bandura, A. (1993). Perceived self-efficacy in cognitive development and functioning. *Educational Psychologist*, *28*(2), 117–148.

Bandura, A. (1994). Self-efficacy. In *Encyclopedia of human behavior* (Vol. 4, pp. 71–81). New York: Academic Press.

Bandura, A. (1997). *Self-efficacy the exercise of control*. New York: W. H. Freeman and Company.

Basilaia, G., & Kvavadze, D. (2020). Transition to online education in schools during a SARS-CoV-2 Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic in Georgia. *Pedagogical Research*, *5*(4), 1–10. https://doi.org/10.29333/pr/7937

Bergmann, J. (2020). Three ways to be ready to make the best use of hybrid class time. Retrieved from https://flr.flglobal.org/dear-future-were-ready-three-ways-to-make-the-best-use-of-class-time/

Bergmann, J., & Sams, A. (2012). *Flip your classroom: Reach every student in every class every day* (1st ed.). Washington, Virginia: International Society for Technology in Education.

Bergmann, J., & Sams, A. (2017). Flipped learning: Gateway to student engagement. *International Society for Technology in Education*, *7*(3), 173–176.

BrandmanCII. (2014). *What is blackboard? YouTube*.

Brossard, M., Cardoso, M., Kamei, A., Mishra, S., Mizunoya, S., & Reuge, N. (2020).

Parental engagement in children's learning. *Unicef Office of Research Innocenty*, (09), 1–6. Retrieved from https://www.unicef-irc.org/publications/pdf/IRB 2020-09 CL.pdf

Brown, A. (2012). *A phenomenological study of undergraduate instructors using the inverted or flipped classroom*. Pepperdine University. https://doi.org/https://biblioteca.uprrp.edu:2110/docview/1238015781?accountid=44825

Butt, A. (2014). Student views on the use of a flipped classroom approach: Evidence from Australia. *Business Education and Accreditation*, *6*(1), 33–43.

Candelaria, E. (2008). *Acronyms and icons used in blogs: Implications for the teaching of ESL*.

Chellapan, L., Meer, J. Van Der, Pratt, K., & Wass, R. (2018). To flip or not to flip, that's the question: Findings from an exploratory study into factors that may influence tertiary teachers to consider a flipped classroom model. *Journal of Open, Flexible and Distant Learning*, *22*(1), 6–21.

Christensen, C., Horn, M., & Staker, H. (2013). Is k-12 blended learning disruptive? *Clayton Christensen Institute*, (May), 1–48.

Chwalisz, K., Altmaier, E., & Russell, D. (2011). Causal attributions, self-efficacy cognitions, and coping with stress. *Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology*, *11*(4), 377–400.

Cilesiz, S. (2009). Educational computer use in leisure contexts: A phenomenological study of adolescents' experiences at internet cafés. *American Educational Research Journal*, *46*(1), 232–274. https://doi.org/10.3102/0002831208323938

Cotto, I. (2020, March 16). Puerto Rico inicia toque de queda por coronavirus. Gobernadora ordena a permanecer en sus casas 24/7. *El Sentinel Orlando*.

Creswell, J. (2007). Five quality approaches to inquiry. In *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches* (pp. 53–84). Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Creswell, J. (2012). *Educational research: Planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research* (4th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education, Inc.

Creswell, J., & Poth, C. (2018). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc.

Cunningham, U. (2017). Flipping the language classroom. *The New Zealand Language Teacher*, *43*, 41–51.

Departamento de Educación de Puerto Rico. (2020). *Secretario de Educación presenta a directores de escuelas el plan de regreso a clases*.

Departamento de Salud Gobierno de Puerto Rico. (2020). *COVID-19: Transmisión, síntomas y medidas de prevención*.

Dişlen, G. (2013). The reasons of lack of motivation from the students' and teachers' voices. *The Journal of Academic Social Science*, *1*(1), 35–45.

Dones, S. (2015). *Perceptions of ESL teachers on curricular maps and planning: Implications for curriculum design*. University of Puerto Rico. https://doi.org/https://biblioteca.uprrp.edu:2110/docview/1689692901?accountid=44825

Dörnyei, Z. (2001). New themes and approaches in second language motivation research. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, *21*, 43–59.

Efron, R. (1969). What is Perception? In *Cohen R.S., Wartofsky M.W. (eds) Proceedings of the Boston Colloquium for the Philosophy of Science 1966/1968.* (Vol. 4, pp. 137–173).

Boston: Springer, Dordrecht. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-010-3378-7_4

Ellis, R., Steed, A., & Applebee, A. (2006). Teacher conceptions of blended learning, blended teaching, and associations with approaches to design. *Australasian Journal of Educational Technology*, *22*(3), 312–335. https://doi.org/10.14742/ajet.1289

Espino, L., Fernandez, G., Hernandez, C., Gonzales, H., & Alvarez, J. (2020). *Analyzing the impact of COVID-19 on education professionals. Toward a paradigm shift : ICT and neuroeducation as a binomial of action*. Cordoba, Spain.

Fan, X. (2018). Research on oral English flipped classroom project-based teaching model based on cooperative learning in China. *Educational Sciences: Theory & Practice*, *18*(5), 1988–1998.

Farmer, T., & West, R. (2019). Exploring the concerns of online K-12 teachers. *Journal of Online Learning Research*, *5*(1), 97–118.

Feldman, J. (2020). *To grade or not to grade. Educational Leadership*. https://doi.org/10.1080/03075077612331376749

Ferdig, R., Baumgartner, E., Hartshorne, R., Kaplan-Rakowski, R., & Mouza, C. (2020). *Teaching, Technology, and Teacher Education During the COVID-19 Pandemic: Stories from the Field. Association for the Advancement of Computing in Education (AACE)*. Retrieved from https://www.learntechlib.org/p/216903/

Fiester, L. (2013). *Early warning confirmed: A research update on third-grade reading*. Baltimore, Maryland.

Freitas, F., Ribeiro, J., Brandão, C., Reis, L., De Souza, F. N., & Costa, A. P. (2017). Learn

by yourself: The self-learning tools for qualitative analysis software packages. *Digital Education Review*, (32), 97–117. https://doi.org/10.1344/der.2017.32.97-117

Fulton, K. (2012). Upside down and inside out: Flip your classroom to improve student learning. *Learning & Leading with Technology*, *39*(8), 12–17.

Gardner, R. (1985). The role of attitudes and motivation in second language learning: Correlational and experimental considerations. *Language Learning*, *35*(2), 207–227.

Gay, L., Mills, G., & Airasian, P. (2012). *Educational research: Competencies for analysis and applications* (10th ed.). New Jersey: Pearson Education, Inc.

Gilakjani, A., Leong, L., & Ismail, H. (2013). Teachers' use of technology and constructivism. *International Journal of Modern Education and Computer Science*, *5*(4), 49–63. https://doi.org/10.5815/ijmecs.2013.04.07

Giorgi, A., & Giorgi, B. (2011). *The SAGE handbook of qualitative research in psychology*. (W. Stainton & C. Willig, Eds.), *SAGE Publications Ltd*. London: SAGE Publications, Ltd. https://doi.org/10.4135/9781848607927

Giorgi, A., Giorgi, B., & Morley, J. (2017). The descriptive phenomenological psychological method. In *The sage handbook of qualitative research in psychology* (pp. 2–26). London: SAGE Publications, Ltd. https://doi.org/10.4135/9781526405555

Hakim, B. (2020). EFL teachers' perceptions and experiences on incorporating blackboard applications in the learning process with modular system at ELI. *International Journal of Innovation, Creativity and Change*, *12*(2), 392–405.

Hall, T., Connolly, C., Ó Grádaigh, S., Burden, K., Kearney, M., Schuck, S., … Kosmas, P. (2020). Education in precarious times: A comparative study across six countries to

identify design priorities for mobile learning in a pandemic. *Information and Learning Science*, *121*(5–6), 423–432. https://doi.org/10.1108/ILS-04-2020-0089

Hernandez, R., Fernandez, C., & Babtista, P. (2014). *Metodologia de la investigacion. McGraw Hill Education* (6ta ed.). https://doi.org/https://www.m-culture.go.th/mculture_th/download/king9/Glossary_abo

Hew, K. F., & Brush, T. (2007). Integrating technology into K-12 teaching and learning: Current knowledge gaps and recommendations for future research. *Educational Technology Research and Development*, *55*(3), 223–252. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11423-006-9022-5

Honeycutt, B., & Glova, S. (2014). Can you flip an online class?

Hoover, K., Bassler, O., & Brissie, J. (1992). Explorations to parents-school relations. *Journal of Educational Research*, *85*(5), 287–294.

Huang, Y. N., & Hong, Z. R. (2016). The effects of a flipped English classroom intervention on students' information and communication technology and English reading comprehension. *Educational Technology Research and Development*, *64*(2), 175–193. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11423-015-9412-7

Husserl, E. (1931). *Ideas: General introduction to pure phenomenology (W. R. Boyce Gibson, Trans.)*. London: George Allen & Unwin.

Irizarry, E. (2019). *¿Qué será de mi borinquen, cuando llegue el temporal?: Puerto Rican English teachers' perception of student resilience in the aftermath of hurricane María*. University of Puerto Rico.

Johnson, K. (2019). *A phenomenological study on teachers ' perceptions regarding the*

implementation of a blended learning program.

Johnston, J. (2020). Creating better definitions of distance education. *Online Journal of Distance Learning Administration*, *23*(2).

Kaden, U. (2020). COVID-19 school closure-related changes to the professional life of a K–12 teacher. *Education Sciences*, *10*(6), 1–13. https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci10060165

Kazakoff, E. R., Macaruso, P., & Hook, P. (2018). Efficacy of a blended learning approach to elementary school reading instruction for students who are English learners. *Educational Technology Research and Development*, *66*(2), 429–449. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11423-017-9565-7

Knight, S. (2020). Establishing professional online communities for world language educators. *Foreign Language Annals*, *53*, 299–318. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1111/flan.12458

Koenigsbauer, K. (2016). *Introducing Microsoft Teams: The chat-based workspace in Office 365*.

Krueger, R. (2002). *Designing and conducting focus group interviewing. Qualitative Marketing Research*. https://doi.org/10.4135/9781849209625.n8

Kvashnina, O., & Martynko, E. (2016). Analyzing the potential of flipped classroom in ESL teaching. *International Journal of Emerging Technologies in Learning*, *11*(3), 71–73.

Li, S., Yamaguchi, S., & Jun-ichi Takada. (2018). Understanding factors affecting primary school teachers ' use of ICT for student-centered education in Mongolia. *International Journal of Education and Development Using Information and Communication Technology (IJEDICT)*, *14*(1), 103–117.

Liamputtong, P. (2015). Virtual focus groups. In *Focus group methodology: Principles and practice* (pp. 2–17). SAGE Publications, Ltd. https://doi.org/10.4135/9781849209403.n101

Lin, C., & Yunus, M. (2012). ESL teacher and ICT: Teachers' perception. *Advances in Language and Literary Studies*, *3*(1), 119–128. https://doi.org/10.7575/aiac.alls.v.3n.1p.119

Linares, A. (2007). Desarrollo cognitivo: Las teorías de Piaget y de Vygotsky. *Col-Legi Oficial de Psicólegs de Catalunya*. Barcelona. https://doi.org/10.3200/JRLP.142.2.159-168

Love, B., Hodge, A., Grandgenett, N., & Swift, A. W. (2014). Student learning and perceptions in a flipped linear algebra course. *International Journal of Mathematical Education in Science and Technology*, *45*(3), 317–324. https://doi.org/10.1080/0020739X.2013.822582

Lucca, N., & Berrios, R. (2013). *Investigacion cualitativa: Una perspectiva transdisciplinaria*. Ediciones SM.

Lucca, N., & Berríos, R. (2009). *Investigación cualitativa: Fundamentos, diseños y estrategias*. Cataño PR: Ediciones SM.

Marshall, H. (2017). The synchronous online flipped learning approach. *Flipped Learning Global Initiative*.

Marshall, H. (2019). 6 models of flipped learning instruction. *Tesol Connections: Keeping English Language Professionals Connected*, (April), 1–6.

Marshall, H., & Rodriguez-Buitrago, C. (2017). TESOL 2017 international convention &

English language expo. In *Synchronous online flipped learning approach*. Seattle, Washington, USA.

Maslow, A. H. (1970). *Motivation and personality*. Harper & Row.

Mazur, A., Brown, B., & Jacobsen, M. (2015). Learning designs using flipped instruction. *Canadian Journal of Learning and Technology*, *41*(2).

Mazur, E. (1991). Can We Teach Computers to Teach? *Physics Education Research American Journal of Physics*, *5*(3), 755. https://doi.org/10.1063/1.4822968

McMillan, J. (2012). *Educational research: Fundamentals for the consumer* (6th ed.). Boston, MA: Pearson Education, Inc.

Merriam, S. (2002). Introduction to qualitative research. In *Qualitative research in practice: Examples for discussion and analysis* (1st ed., pp. 3–17).

Miller, I. (1984). Perceptual reference. *Synthese*, *61*(1), 35–59.

Miller, J. (2020). Transition to online teaching. *Online Education*.

Moffett, J. (2015). Twelve tips for "flipping" the classroom. *Medical Teacher*, *37*(4), 331–336.

Moghari, E., Lavasani, M., Bagherian, V., & Afshari, J. (2011). Relationship between perceived teacher's academic optimism and English achievement: Role of self-efficacy. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, *15*, 2329–2333. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2011.04.102

Mok, H. (2014). Teaching tip: The flipped classroom. *Journal of Information Systems Education*, *25*(1), 7–11.

Moustakas, C. (1990). Research design and methodology. In *Heuristic research: Design*

methodology and applications (pp. 38–58). https://doi.org/10.5772/intechopen.85731

Moustakas, C. (1994a). Epoche, phenomenological reduction, imaginative variation, and

synthesis. In *Phenomenological research methods* (pp. 84–102). SAGE Publications,

Inc.

Moustakas, C. (1994b). Human science perspectives and models. In *Phenomenological*

research methods (pp. 1–24). SAGE Publications, Inc.

Moustakas, C. (1994c). Intentionality, noema, and noesis. In *Phenomenological research*

methods (pp. 68–83). SAGE Publications, Inc.

Moustakas, C. (1994d). Phenomenological research analyses and examples. In

Phenomenological research methods (pp. 120–154). SAGE Publications, Inc.

Moustakas, C. (1994e). Transcendental phenomenology: Conceptual framework. In

Phenomenological research methods (pp. 25–42). SAGE Publications, Inc.

Mukhtar, K., Javed, K., Arooj, M., & Sethi, A. (2020). Advantages, limitations and

recommendations for online learning during COVID-19 pandemic era. *Pakistan Journal*

of Medical Sciences, *36*, 27–32. https://doi.org/10.12669/pjms.36.covid19-s4.2785

Newman, G., Kim, J., Lee, R., Brown, B., & Huston, S. (2016). The perceived effects of

flipped teaching on knowledge acquisition. *The Journal of Effective Teaching*, *16*(161),

52–71.

Owen, G. (2014). Qualitative methods in higher education policy analysis: Using interviews

and document analysis. *Qualitative Report*, *19*(26), 1–19.

Paesani, K. (2020). Teacher professional development and online instruction: Cultivating

coherence and sustainability. *Foreign Language Annals*, *53*, 292–297.

Pajares, F., & Miller, D. (1994). Role of self-efficacy and self-concept beliefs in mathematical problem solving: A path analysis. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, *86*(2), 193–203.

Peoples, K. (2020). *How to write a phenomenological dissertation: A step by step guide*. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications, Kindle Edition.

Prescott, J., Bundschuh, K., Kazakoff, E., & Macaruso, P. (2018). Elementary school–wide implementation of a blended learning program for reading intervention. *Journal of Educational Research*, *111*(4), 497–506. https://doi.org/10.1080/00220671.2017.1302914

Reich, J., Buttimer, C., Coleman, D., Colwell, R., Faruqi, F., & Larke, L. (2020). *What's lost, what's left, what's next : Lessons learned from the lived experiences of teachers during the 2020 novel Coronavirus pandemic*. *Teaching Systems Lab*.

Reimers, F., & Schleicher, A. (2020). A framework to guide an education response to the COVID - 19 pandemic of 2020. *Oecd*, 1–40.

Reimers, F., Schleicher, A., Saavedra, J., & Tuominen, S. (2020). *Supporting the continuation of teaching and learning during the COVID-19 pandemic: Annotated resources for online learning*. *Oecd*. Retrieved from https://www.oecd.org/education/Supporting-the-continuation-of-teaching-and-learning-during-the-COVID-19-pandemic.pdf

Ríos, M. (2017). *Perspectives of Puerto Rican English teachers on teaching speaking: Implications for classroom practices*. *Cambridge University Press*. University of Puerto Rico.

Rogers, E. (1983). *Diffusion of innovations. An Integrated Approach to Communication Theory and Research* (3rd ed.). https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203710753-35

Ryan, R., & Deci, E. (2000). Self-determination theory and the facilitation of intrinsic

    motivation, social development, and well-being. *American Psychologist*, *55*(1), 68–78.

Saban, Y. (2013). The flipped classroom instructional module. In *TCC Conference Paper*.

Saglam, A., & Sert, S. (2012). Perceptions of in-service teachers regarding technology

    integrated English language teaching. *Turkish Online Journal of Qualitative Inquiry,*

    3(3), 1–14. https://doi.org/10.17569/tojqi.55006

Santiago, L. (2020, March 19). Atrasada la isla con su educación a distancia. *Metro Puerto*

    Rico.

Saranraj, L., & Zafar, S. (2016). Motivation in second language learning-A retrospect.

    International Interdisciplinary Research Journal, *4*(1), 7–13.

Saville-Troke, M. (2006). *Introducing second language acquisition.* University of Arizona:

    Cambridge University Press.

Semingson, P., Owens, D., & Kerns, W. (2020). *"Connected" literacies: Virtual storybook*

    reading and digital writing during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Sexto, M. (2015). *ESL teachers' perceptions towards the use of technology in teaching*

    English. ProQuest LLC. University of Puerto Rico.

Shenton, A. (2004). Strategies for ensuring trustworthiness in qualitative research projects.

    Education for Information, *22*(2), 63–75. https://doi.org/10.3233/EFI-2004-22201

Smith, J. (2018). *A phenomenological exploration of secondary teachers' perceptions of the*

    flipped classroom model. Liberty University.

Sung, K. (2015). A case study on a flipped classroom in an EFL content course. *Multimedia-*

    Assisted Language Learning, *18*(2), 159–187.

Toro, K. (2020). Madre relata cómo se las ingenia para que sus dos hijos de educación especial reciban el pan de la enseñanza: No tienen computadoras, y solo cuentan con un celular para educarse. *Telemundo Puerto Rico*.

Tschannen, M., & Hoy, A. (2001). Teacher efficacy: Capturing an elusive construct. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, *17*(7), 783–805. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0742-051X(01)00036-1

Tucker, B. (2012). The flipped classroom. *Education Next*, *12*(1).

Watson, J., Murin, A., Vashaw, L., Gemin, B., & Rapp, C. (2011). *Keeping pace with K-12 online learning: An annual review of policy and practice. Evergreen Education Group*.

Webb, M., & Doman, E. (2016). Does the flipped classroom lead to increased gains on learning outcomes in esl/efl contexts? *CATESOL*, *28*(1), 39–67.

Woolfolk, A. (2004). *Educational psychology*. Boston, Massachusetts: New Delhi: Pearson Education.

Yazan, B. (2015). Three approaches to case study methods in education: Yin, Merriam, and Stake. *The Qualitative Report*, *20*(2), 134–152.

Yen, T. (2020). The performance of online teaching for flipped classroom based on COVID-19 aspect. *Asian Journal of Education and Social Studies*, *8*(3), 57–64. https://doi.org/10.9734/AJESS/2020/v8i330229

Zainuddin, Z., & Halili, S. (2016). *Flipped classroom research and trends from different fields of study. International Review of Research in Open and Distance Learning* (Vol. 17). https://doi.org/10.19173/irrodl.v17i3.2274

Zhou, Z. (2018). Second language learning in the technology-mediated environments. *Asian*

Education Studies, 3(1), 18.

APPENDICES

APPENDICES

A. Director Authorization Letter

DEPARTAMENTO DE ESTUDIOS GRADUADOS
UNIVERSIDAD DE PUERTO RICO, RECINTO DE RÍO PIEDRAS, FACULTAD DE EDUCACIÓN

Fecha: _____

Estimado _____

Director Escolar

Escuela San Germán Interamericana

Solicitud de Autorización para Director Escolar

Mi nombre es Miriam Cruz Colón. Soy estudiante de la Universidad de Puerto Rico, Recinto de Río Piedras. Como requisito para obtener el grado de Doctor en Currículo (TESL), realizaré una investigación titulada: **"Puerto Rican English Teachers' Perceptions of Distance Reading Lessons in Times of COVID 19".** *Será un estudio fenomenológico de las "Percepciones de los maestros en la enseñanza de lecciones de lectura en tiempos de COVID-19 en el área suroeste de Puerto Rico.*

El objetivo del estudio es capturar las percepciones de maestros de inglés de los grados K-12 y de sus experiencias al implementar lecciones de lectura a distancia como resultado de la pandemia del COVID 19 y los terremotos en el área sur oeste de Puerto Rico. Por este medio solicito su autorización para realizar mi investigación en su escuela. En esta investigación participarán de manera voluntaria aproximadamente de 5-8 maestros de la escuela la cual usted dirige. Se les pedirá colaboración a maestros(as) que enseñan inglés en los grados del K-12. A continuación le proveo información para que pueda tomar la decisión de autorizar o no.

La participación de los maestros consistirá en contestar preguntas de una entrevista individual (podrá requerirse una sesión adicional) y una entrevista de grupo focal. Todas las entrevistas serán grabadas de forma virtual en audio y el grupo focal en audio y video para ayudar en la transcripción. Ambos instrumentos se utilizarán para obtener información relacionada a las experiencias y percepciones de los maestros(as) en la implementación de lecciones de lectura a distancia. Se le pedirá a cada maestro también entregar un plan o lección de lectura.

Todos los instrumentos serán diseñados-adaptados por mi persona para realizar este estudio. Los instrumentos serán contestados virtualmente en la hora y fecha que se coordine con los maestros(as) luego de firmar el consentimiento informado. La administración de las preguntas de las entrevistas individuales y la entrevista del grupo focal se realizarán durante un horario que no afecte el período lectivo, como por ejemplo en el hogar y través de Google Meet o

DEPARTAMENTO DE ESTUDIOS GRADUADOS
UNIVERSIDAD DE PUERTO RICO, RECINTO DE RÍO PIEDRAS, FACULTAD DE EDUCACIÓN

Microsoft Teams. Una descripción de un mínimo riesgo o incomodidad previsible para los participantes podría ser el cansancio o el aburrimiento al contestar las preguntas de las entrevistas individuales y las del grupo focal. Se tomarán medidas apropiadas para minimizar lo descrito anteriormente ofreciendo un descanso adecuado de ser necesario.

La participación de los maestros(as) es voluntaria y no conlleva riesgos físicos para ellos(as). Se mantendrá la confidencialidad de las respuestas que los maestros(as) provean y de su identidad, ya que en las entrevistas individuales y en la entrevista de grupo focal no será identificado con el nombre del maestro por lo tanto se les asignará un pseudónimo, código, o número para así proteger la privacidad de los participantes. Esta investigación es con fines educativos.

La colaboración que solicitamos de los maestros(as):
1. Es voluntaria, con fines educativos y libre de riesgos a su persona.
2. Deberán salvaguardar la confidencialidad de la información contenida en los documentos.

Espero poder llevar a cabo mi investigación en su escuela. De tener alguna duda puede comunicarse conmigo al 787-709-2383 o al correo electrónico miriam.cruz1@upr.edu.

De usted estar de acuerdo o no con la colaboración que le solicitó en esta investigación, por favor marque con una (x) en el espacio que indique su decisión, complete la información requerida, firme y devuelva el documento.

___ Autorizo la realización de la investigación.
___ No autorizo la investigación.

_____ __ _____   _____
Nombre del Director   Firma del Director   Fecha

Miriam Cruz Colón
_____   _____   _____
Nombre del investigador   Firma del investigador   Fecha

131

DEPARTAMENTO DE ESTUDIOS GRADUADOS
UNIVERSIDAD DE PUERTO RICO, RECINTO DE RÍO PIEDRAS, FACULTAD DE EDUCACIÓN

HOJA DE CONSENTIMIENTO INFORMADO

Título de la Investigación
PUERTO RICAN ENGLISH TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF DISTANCE READING LESSONS IN TIMES OF COVID 19

Descripción

Usted ha sido invitado a participar en una investigación titulada: "*Puerto Rican English Teachers' Perceptions of Distance Reading Lessons in Times of COVID 19".* El estudio será uno de tipo fenomenológico de las *"Percepciones de los maestros en la enseñanza de lecciones de lectura en tiempos de COVID-19" en el área suroeste de Puerto Rico.*

Esta investigación será realizada por Miriam Cruz Colón, candidata doctoral del Programa de Currículo y Enseñanza de Inglés del Departamento de Estudios Graduados de la Facultad de Educación de la Universidad de Puerto Rico, Recinto de Río Piedras. El objetivo del estudio es capturar las percepciones de maestros de inglés de los grados K-12 y de sus experiencias al implementar lecciones de lectura a distancia como resultado de la pandemia del COVID 19 y los terremotos en el área sur oeste de Puerto Rico.

Usted fue seleccionado para participar de esta investigación porque tiene 21 años o más, enseña en una escuela privada, y ofrece clases en el área de inglés a niños entre los grados de K-12 con modalidad a distancia, esto a causa de la pandemia del COVID 19 y los terremotos. Se seleccionó su escuela pues está localizada en el área sur de Puerto Rico y ha sufrido los efectos de la pandemia del COVID19 y de los constantes movimientos telúricos

Se espera que participen aproximadamente de 5-8 maestros de inglés. El estudio es de tipo fenomenológico y su propósito será describir las experiencias y percepciones de maestros de una escuela privada del suroeste de Puerto Rico que estén utilizando la enseñanza de lectura a distancia.

Procedimiento

Si acepta colaborar con esta investigación:

DEPARTAMENTO DE ESTUDIOS GRADUADOS
UNIVERSIDAD DE PUERTO RICO, RECINTO DE RÍO PIEDRAS, FACULTAD DE EDUCACIÓN

1. Esta hoja de consentimiento informado se discutirá con los participantes por medio telefónico antes de la entrevista para clarificar dudas o preguntas referentes al protocolo.
2. Como participante del estudio deberá completar una entrevista individual con el investigador por Google Suite o Microsoft Teams. La entrevista contendrá preguntas relacionados a sus percepciones, actitudes, creencias y opiniones con relación a la implementación de la enseñanza de lectura a distancia, deberá durar aproximadamente 40 minutos y será grabada en audio.
3. Como participante del estudio se le pedirá que revise la transcripción de su entrevista para verificar su exactitud. Tendrá un periodo de 3 días para que pueda corroborar su transcripción.
4. Como participante del estudio se le pedirá que sea parte de una entrevista de grupo focal donde se discutirán sus experiencias y percepciones en el uso de la enseñanza de lectura a distancia. Esta entrevista de grupo focal tendrá una duración aproximada de 60 minutos.
5. La entrevista de grupo focal será grabada en audio y video por Google Meet o Microsoft Teams. (Puede haber cargos adicionales por el consumo de datos mobiles).
6. Como participante de este estudio se le enviará copia de la transcripción del grupo focal para su revisión y así asegurar la exactitud de esta. Así como en la entrevista individual, en la entrevista de grupo focal tendrá un lapso de 3 días para que pueda revisar y corroborar su transcripción.
7. Como participante del estudio deberá entregar una copia de un plan de lectura (Reading Lesson Plan).
8. Antes de la entrevista se redactará una hoja con instrucciones específicas para el uso de la herramienta o plataforma virtual que se vaya a utilizar para las entrevistas, así como los aditamentos necesarios (audífonos y micrófonos). Esta información se enviará con un día de anticipación por vía email (también se discutirá por teléfono), con las instrucciones del protocolo a usarse y que acción tomar si se interrumpe la comunicación.
9. Al inicio de la entrevista se le compartirá a los participantes la pantalla con las instrucciones del manejo del micrófono, como apagar la cámara y el protocolo de preguntas.

10. El tiempo aproximado para su participación en el estudio será de 2 horas. Esto incluye: la firma y envío del consentimiento informado, la entrevista individual, la entrevista de grupo focal y la corroboración de las transcripciones.

DEPARTAMENTO DE ESTUDIOS GRADUADOS
UNIVERSIDAD DE PUERTO RICO, RECINTO DE RÍO PIEDRAS, FACULTAD DE EDUCACIÓN

Riesgos y beneficios

Los riesgos asociados con este estudio son mínimos. Se limitan a la posible incomodidad con las preguntas. Si desea, podrá dejar de responder alguna pregunta y retirar su participación en cualquier momento. Sin embargo, la investigadora se encargará de establecer un ambiente de confianza y completa confidencialidad para su comodidad durante las entrevistas.

La colaboración que solicitamos de usted en las actividades de este estudio:

1. Es voluntaria, con fines educativos y libre de riesgos a su persona. Deberá salvaguardar la confidencialidad de la información contenida en los documentos (carta de consentimiento, transcripciones)
2. No conlleva beneficios para los participantes, aunque si beneficiará saber sobre las experiencias educativas en cuanto a la enseñanza de la lectura distancia.

Nota: No existe ninguna relación entre el investigador y el participante o la institución donde se realizará el estudio.

Confidencialidad

Para salvaguardar la confidencialidad, la investigadora, Miriam Cruz Colón le asignará un pseudónimo, código o número para identificar sus respuestas en las entrevistas individuales y el grupo focal. En el estudio no se incluirá ninguna información que identifique la escuela ni los participantes. Los archivos digitales y transcripciones serán almacenados en la computadora de la investigadora con una contraseña para protección de los datos. Las grabaciones de las
entrevistas serán borradas luego de ser transcritas y verificadas. Los archivos y documentos serán guardados por la investigadora indefinidamente en caso de futura diseminación o publicación. También debe conocer que el supervisor de la investigación, el Dr. Kevin Carroll también tendrá acceso a los datos crudos de la investigación.

Documentos, Material o Datos Con Identificadores

La información de contacto de los participantes se mantendrá en la computadora personal de la investigadora y protegida con contraseña. Al transcurso un año la investigadora procederá a borrar la información. Las hojas de consentimiento informado con identificadores serán guardadas en la computadora personal de la investigadora y protegida con contraseña por un periodo de 3 años y luego se procederá a borrar del dispositivo. Los documentos con identificadores impresos con información sobre los participantes serán guardados en un archivo bajo llave. Al transcurso de un año se procederá a triturar los documentos impresos. Las grabaciones en audio y video, digital e impreso, con identificadores, serán guardados por un periodo de un año en la computadora personal de la investigadora, protegido con contraseña y en archivo bajo llave. Inmediatamente se procederá a borrar del dispositivo y triturar los documentos impresos.

Documentos, Material o Datos Sin Identificadores

Las transcripciones sin identificadores, digital e impreso serán guardadas indefinidamente en la computadora personal de la investigadora, protegidas con contraseña y archivo bajo llave en caso de que se publiquen los datos de forma anónima.

Oficiales del recinto de Rio Piedras de la Universidad de Puerto Rico o de agencias federales responsables por velar por la integridad en la investigación podrán pedirle a la investigadora los datos obtenidos de este estudio, incluyendo este documento.

Es importante que usted entienda que la información que usted comparta en el dispositivo (computadora, celular u otro) o plataforma que utilice puede ser intervenida o revisada por terceras personas. Estas personas pueden tener acceso legitimo o ilegitimo al dispositivo y a su contenido como un familiar, patrono, hackers, intrusos o piratas informáticos, etc. Además, en el dispositivo que utilice puede quedar registro de la información que acceda o envíe electrónicamente.

Cláusula Especifica para Grupos Focales

La investigadora no puede garantizar que la información compartida en el grupo focal no sea revelada por los participantes, pero se exhortará a los participantes a mantener la confidencialidad de la información y a no grabar la sesión.

DEPARTAMENTO DE ESTUDIOS GRADUADOS
UNIVERSIDAD DE PUERTO RICO, RECINTO DE RÍO PIEDRAS, FACULTAD DE EDUCACIÓN

Derechos

Si ha leído este documento y ha decidido participar, por favor entienda que su participación es completamente voluntaria y que tiene derecho a abstenerse de participar o a retirarse del estudio en cualquier momento sin ningún tipo de penalidad. También tiene derecho a no contestar alguna pregunta en particular. Al culminar la sesión de entrevistas se le instruirá al participante sobre como terminar su participación o cerrar la plataforma ("logout") al concluir la entrevista. Se exhorta a que grabe e imprima este documento.

La investigadora, Miriam Cruz Colón es estudiante del Programa Doctoral de Currículo y Enseñanza de Inglés Como Segunda Lengua del Departamento de Estudios Graduados de la Facultad de Educación de la Universidad de Puerto Rico, Recinto de Río Piedras. El propósito de esta divulgación es para que usted pueda determinar si esta relación afecta su disposición a participar en este estudio.

Si tiene alguna pregunta o desea más información sobre esta investigación, por favor comuníquese con Miriam Cruz Colón vía email a miriam.cruz1@upr.edu o por teléfono al (787) 709-2383. También puede contactar al director de Disertación Dr. Kevin S. Carroll a kevin.carroll@upr.edu o al (787) 764-0000 ext. 89346.

Si tiene preguntas sobre sus derechos como participante o una reclamación o queja relacionada con su participación en este estudio, puede comunicarse con la Oficial de Cumplimiento del Recinto de Río Piedras de la Universidad de Puerto Rico al teléfono 787-764-0000, extensión 86773 o a cipshi.degi@upr.edu.
De usted estar de acuerdo o no con la colaboración que le solicito en esta investigación, por favor marque con una (x) el espacio que indique su decisión complete la información requerida, firme y devuelva el documento.

_____   Acepto colaborar en las actividades de la investigación.

_____   No acepto colaborar en las actividades de la investigación.

DEPARTAMENTO DE ESTUDIOS GRADUADOS
UNIVERSIDAD DE PUERTO RICO, RECINTO DE RÍO PIEDRAS, FACULTAD DE EDUCACIÓN

_____   _____   _____

Nombre del Maestro   Firma del maestro   Fecha

Miriam Cruz Colón

Miriam Cruz Colón   _____   Feb. 18, 2021

Nombre del investigador   Firma del investigador   Fecha

Esta sección no puede recortarse ni desprenderse del documento.

137

C. Authorization Letter-Institutional Committee for the Protection of Human Participants

COMITÉ INSTITUCIONAL PARA LA PROTECCIÓN DE LOS SERES HUMANOS
EN LA INVESTIGACIÓN (CIPSHI)
IRB 00000944
cipshi.degi@upr.edu ~ http://graduados.uprrp.edu/cipshi

AUTORIZACIÓN DEL PROTOCOLO

Número del protocolo:	2021-058
Título del protocolo:	Puerto Rican English Teachers' Perceptions of Distance Reading Lessons in Times of COVID 19
Investigadora:	Miriam Cruz Colón
Tipo de revisión:	☑ Inicial ☐ Renovación
Evaluación:	☐ Comité en pleno
	☑ Revisión expedita:
	Categoría(s) expedita 45 CFR §46.110: 2 (ii)
Fecha de la autorización:	15 de enero de 2021

Cualquier modificación posterior a esta autorización requerirá la consideración y reautorización del CIPSHI. Además, debe notificar cualquier incidente adverso o no anticipado que implique a los sujetos o participantes. Al finalizar la investigación, envíe el formulario de Notificación de Terminación de Protocolo.

Margarita Moscoso Álvarez, Ph.D.
Presidenta del CIPSHI o
representante autorizado

D. CITI Program Approval Certificate

CITI PROGRAM

Completion Date 30-Aug-2018
Expiration Date 29-Aug-2021
Record ID 28418919

This is to certify that:

Miriam Cruz

Has completed the following CITI Program course:

Not valid for renewal of certification through CME.

Investigaciones psicológicas, sociales o educativas
(Curriculum Group)
Investigaciones psicológicas, sociales o educativas con seres humanos
(Course Learner Group)
1 - Stage 1
(Stage)

Under requirements set by:

Universidad de Puerto Rico, Recinto de Río Piedras

CITI
Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative

Themes and semi-structured questions for individual interviews

Themes	Questions
Background and Education	1. Where and what did you study before becoming a teacher? 2. How many years of teaching experience do you have? 3. What grade(s) do you teach? 4. What other experiences have helped you in your actual job as a teacher?
Beliefs	5. Which skills do you believe need more time to be taught, listening, speaking, reading, or writing? Why? 6. Which of the following three distance teaching approaches do you believe is the most assertive/practical when teaching distance reading lessons? a) Teaching face to face or remote(synchronous), b) hybrid teaching, or c) online or asynchronous? Please explain why? 7. What do you consider are your strengths when teaching distance reading lessons? 8. What are your weaknesses when teaching distance reading lessons?
Opinions	9. What is your opinion of the transition process from face-to-face to distance teaching? 10. How do you develop students' motivation to read online? 11. Which digital platforms besides Zoom, Blackboard, Microsoft Teams, do you think may work best for teaching online reading lessons? Why? 12. How can the English curriculum be re-arranged to improve distance reading lessons for your students? 13. How can English teachers improve their technological skills to teach distance reading lessons? (E.g., Training, communities of practice, peer coaching). 14. What attributes does your lesson plan have that helps you teach distance reading lessons adequately?
Attitudes	15. What is your overall attitude about distance reading lessons? 16. Recall an online reading lesson you taught. Describe your attitude just as you perceived it.
Resources Distance Teaching Benefits Distance Teaching Challenges	17. Describe your best practices, including resources for online distance reading lessons. 18. What are the benefits if any, of teaching distance reading lessons in times of the COVID-19? 19. What are the challenges if any, of teaching distance reading lessons in times of the COVID-19? (E.g., time, grading, communication, technological concerns).
Closing	20. Are there any other comments or thoughts that you would like to share?

F. Focus Group Questions

1. Tell me a about your actual curriculum, the "Learn Hybrid" curriculum. How does it work and how has it changed during the pandemic?

2. Tell me about your recent strategies teaching reading lessons online and why do you believe these have helped you improve your teaching?

3. Do you believe that going back to normal will make you lose what technology has to offer in terms of distance reading lessons? Please explain why.

4. How do you develop motivation to read in this distance reading setting?

5. What would you suggest adding to your "Learn Hybrid" lesson plan to improve your distance reading lessons?

6. How has your attitude toward distance teaching of reading lessons changed from where you started distance teaching until today and why?

7. What attitudes do you believe teachers need, to perform adequately as they teach reading lessons online, and why?

8. What have been the benefits of teaching distance reading lessons in times of the COVID 19 pandemic?

9. What have been your challenges of distance reading lessons in times of the COVID 19 pandemic? For example, time, testing, technological concerns, or communication.

G. Semi-Structured Interviews and Focus Group Categories

RQ1: What are teachers' beliefs on the use of distance reading lessons?	• Teaching Priorities: Listening, Speaking, Reading, or Writing • Teaching Face to Face, Hybrid, or Online • Teachers' Strengths on Distance Teaching of Reading Lessons • Teachers' Weaknesses on Teaching Distance Reading Lessons
RQ2: What are teachers' opinions on the use of distance reading lessons?	• Transitioning to Distance Reading Lessons • Developing Students Motivation to Read Online • Digital Platforms for Distance Reading Lessons • Improving the Curriculum of Distance Reading Lessons • Improving Teachers' Technological Skills
RQ3: What are teachers' attitudes on the use of distance reading lessons?	• Overall attitude toward distance reading lessons • Changes on Teachers' Attitudes • Positive Attitudes • Recalling an Online Reading Lessons
RQ4: What necessary resources do ESL teachers perceive as important for successful implementation of distance reading lessons in times of the COVID 19 pandemic?	• Best Practices and Resources for Distance Reading Lessons • Lesson Plan Attributes
RQ5: What benefits, if any, do K-12 ESL private school teachers describe from implementing distance reading lessons in times of the COVID 19 pandemic?	• Benefits of Teaching Distance Reading Lessons
RQ6: What challenges, if any, do K-12 private ESL teachers describe from implementing distance reading lessons in times of the COVID 19 pandemic?	• Lack of time and Technology Issues • Teachers' stress • Parent/Teacher Communication • Challenges on Student Evaluations

H. AUTHOR'S BIOGRAPHY

Miriam Cruz, Ed.D., was born in Jersey City, New Jersey. She has a degree of Doctor of Education in Curriculum and Instruction with a specialization in (TESL) Teaching English as a Second Language from the University of Puerto Rico, Rio Piedras Campus (UPR-RP). She has a master's degree in Arts: Education of English as a Second Language and a B.S. in Biology, both from the Inter American University of San German. Miriam has a teaching certificate from the Puerto Rico Department of Education where she worked as an elementary English teacher for 27 years and was honored with two Teacher of Excellence Awards, in May 2000 and May 2009. She also has a K-12 ESOL (English to Speakers of Other Languages) teaching license from the Virginia, Department of Education where she worked as an ESOL teacher at the elementary level.