

# **Coping with the Transition to Remote Learning: The Experiences of Tertiary Level Business Educators in Angeles and in Clark, Pampanga**

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## **ABSTRACT**

The lived experiences of 25 business educators who transitioned to teaching remotely during the 1<sup>st</sup> Semester of Academic Year 2020-2021 in tertiary level academic institutions in Angeles and in Clark, Pampanga were examined in this study. The themes that emerged from the educators' narratives include issues on connectivity and access to compatible devices, sudden transition into remote learning, a one-way stream of learning and maintaining student interest, and the toll on educators' over-all well-being. To cope with these challenges, these professors adopted several methods such as advance recording of lessons, conducting synchronous classes via conferencing platforms, adjusting assessment tools to suit online delivery, and capacitating themselves through webinars and training. Moreover, to feel supported by their institutions, these business educators suggested that Higher Educational Institutions (HEIs) assist them by securing access to stable internet and procuring compatible devices like laptops and tablets, granting access to educational resources online, and showing concern for their overall health and well-being. Remote learning has transformed the usual delivery of education. While it has long been an alternative education modality, the initial experiences of these business educators have reinforced its applicability especially in teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic.

*Keywords: remote learning, business education, phenomenology*

## **Introduction**

The onslaught of COVID-19 in the Philippines has affected every facet of living, from the conduct of business and education to daily human interaction. In fact, it has disrupted lives and has generated new modalities of dealing with what used to be normal before the pandemic. COVID-19 forced tertiary-level business educators to confront challenges that required the transition from the normal procedures of education to the use of remote modalities of administration, teaching, and learning.

The education industry is one of the most severely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. This virus, likened to the 1918 and 1957 flu pandemics in terms of death rate, led to the promotion of Remote Learning (Ebrahimi, et.al., 2020), a modality of learning suitable for situations wherein the classroom setting is not possible due to either differences in time or distance between the instructor and student (Remote Learning, n.d.). This modality was seen as a suitable approach because physical or residential classes were temporarily prohibited to prevent the dangers posed by COVID-19.

A great number of countries saw remote learning as an opportunity and temporarily switched to online learning, a form of remote education that makes use of the internet (Ebrahimi, et. al., 2020). Online learning may be categorized into synchronous or asynchronous. While both categories use online platforms, they differ in terms of the manner of instruction. Synchronous learning happens in real-time; the professors deliver their lessons using an online platform such as Zoom or Google Meet. On the other hand, asynchronous learning is not tied to instructor-student concurrent interaction (Synchronous Learning vs Asynchronous Learning, n.d.). In this modality, the students learn independently by accessing modules and videos uploaded by their instructors to a Learning Management System (LMS).

While this shift to remote learning was seen as necessary, many educators found themselves ill-equipped for the transition. With minimal to no training, professors needed to swiftly make their courses appropriate for remote instruction. The most common strategy used by educators was to transfer their existing courses into an LMS while holding synchronous classes. The professors' teaching strategies, activities, and learning outcomes remained the

same. It was reported, however, that their assessment tools were modified by revising the format of exams and decreasing the number of requirements (Lederman, 2020).

In the Philippines, debates ensued whether or not to freeze the academic year. This is for the reason that most students, unfortunately, have an unstable internet connection and unequal access to devices used for online learning, such as laptops and tablets (Hallere, 2020). To address this, the Department of Education (DepEd) implemented a Basic Education Learning Continuity Plan (BE-LCP). The government agency called on its teachers to be innovative and resourceful in delivering quality education. The BE-LCP aims to ensure that the opportunity to learn is equally and safely provided to students through different learning modalities. Learning resources both print and non-print were provided through alternative delivery methods with the supervision of an adult (parent or guardian), and monitoring and guidance of teachers (Dep Ed, 2020a). Furthermore, DepEd deferred the official opening of classes to October 5, 2020. This was to give way for the necessary preparations for the shift into these new modalities and to address gaps to successfully start modules in the context of the BE-LCP (Dep Ed, 2020b). Meanwhile, the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) gave the heads of Higher Educational Institutions (HEIs) the discretion to ascertain the situation in their campuses as well as prescribe or adapt solutions for remote learning, be it online learning or other alternative modes in place of the usual classroom delivery (CHED, 2020).

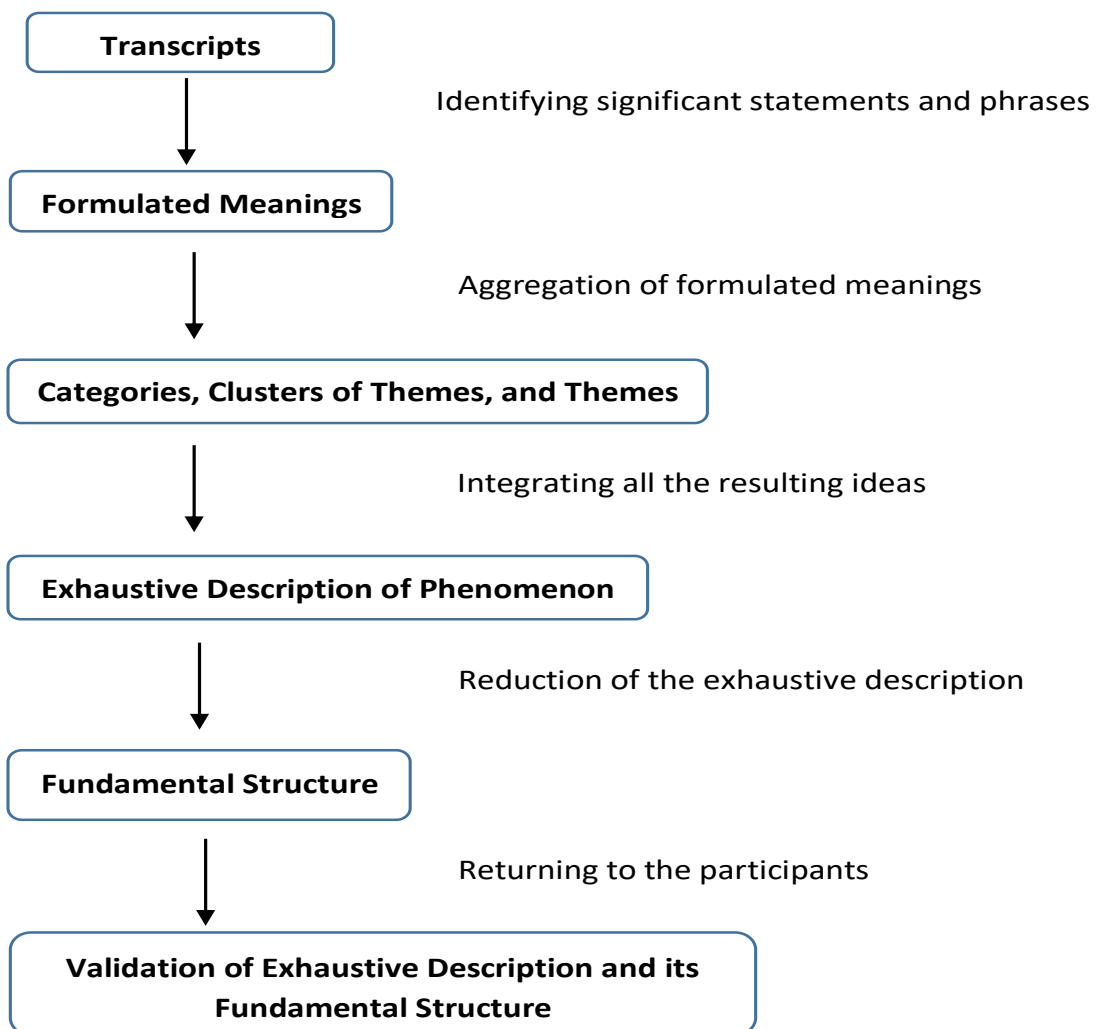
## **Methodology**

Using a qualitative approach, this study was framed with Interpretivism as its philosophical underpinning. It also employed a phenomenological case study research design.

According to Morrow, et al. (2020), phenomenology in a descriptive qualitative design is useful in areas where there is little existing literature. Because there is a scarcity of research regarding how educators coped with the remote learning challenges experienced during the shift into this modality (Creswell, 2012), those who have lived this experience could provide the information instead.

By the same token, a case study design is suitable when examining an object, person, program, or phenomenon (Merriam, 2009) such as how these educators experienced challenges in having to abruptly transition into using remote modality to be able to continue teaching their students during the 1<sup>st</sup> semester of the Academic Year 2020-2021. More importantly, this study looked into the methods they adopted to be able to deal with these challenges.

Shosha's framework, an adaptation and a condensed version of the Colaizzi Method of Data Analysis, shown in the figure below, was used in processing the data gathered for this study.



**Figure 1.** *Shosha's Adaptation of Colaizzi's Method of Data Analysis (2012)*

This qualitative framework was chosen as the paradigm through which this study was formulated for its exacting and meticulous nature as a process aside from the credibility and reliability of its results. Using Shosha's framework in analyzing these narratives leads not only to the detection of emerging themes but also to the discovery of these themes' interconnected relationships (Wirihana, et al., 2018).

Using the above framework, the author processed the responses from the participants as follows: as soon as all the narratives were received, transcripts were coded using a spreadsheet. In cases where the author encountered vague answers, participants were re-contacted, mostly through phone calls although emailing and Facebook messaging were also utilized for clarification.

Information was analyzed, first by noting the repeated responses shared by the participants. These responses were then grouped into clusters based on their similarity in context and words used. From this, the author discovered several emerging themes which are presented in this study. After integrating all resulting ideas and writing an exhaustive description to elaborate on the lived experiences of the participants, the author presented these findings to the participants, which the participants validated through email correspondence. A majority of the participants have responded in agreement with the resulting themes presented in this study, thereby validating the results of this research.

### **Data Collection**

Due to the ongoing lockdowns throughout the 1st Semester of the Academic Year 2020-2021, information from the participants was gathered through a semi-structured, written interview administered online using Google Forms.

The researcher wanted to identify the challenges encountered by educators teaching business courses since they were left with no choice but to transition to teaching remotely. Likewise, the author was curious whether the participants experienced challenges that may be specific to teaching business subjects. The author was also interested to find out what methods these business educators adopted to cope with these said challenges and how these professors

thought their academic institutions might provide support to fully address the difficulties that they encountered during this period.

## **Sampling**

Similar to snowball sampling, participants were chosen through networked connections among peers in the collegiate education community in Angeles and in Clark. However, since this research employed a qualitative phenomenological research design, non-probability sampling was used. The initial participants were targeted purposively since the researcher is after understanding these business educators' experiences as they faced the challenges of coping with the sudden shift into remote modality. Purposive convenience sampling, a type of non-probability sampling is common in qualitative research designs since qualitative researchers rarely fix their sample size; rather, they usually determine their cases gradually by adding more participants until the point of saturation (Ishak & Bakar, 2013). Saturation is reached when the added participants no longer give new information that could lead to the discovery of other themes (Saunders, et.al, 2017).

While non-probability convenience sampling is disadvantaged in terms of generalizability when judged against probability sampling, the former is the standard within developmental science and will likely continue to be the norm for its advantages in examining developmental questions compared to unsuitable and usually costly probability sampling techniques (Jager, et.al, 2017). Moreover, in qualitative phenomenological studies, the discovery of the phenomenon is illuminated from the participants shared experiences, and not from inference for the whole population given a sample (Ishak & Bakar, 2013).

Furthermore, using non-probability convenience sampling is more efficient especially when the researcher has finite resources, particularly time and workforce (Etikan, et. al, 2016). Since the pandemic has hampered the researcher's mobility due to the lockdowns while this study was ongoing, non-probability convenience sampling demonstrated its usefulness in tapping available business educators who willingly participated in this research.

## Participants of the Study

This research targeted business educators as participants. As a qualifier, each participant must have been teaching a business course (including economics and hospitality management subjects) for at least three years in the following higher educational institutions in Angeles and in Clark, Pampanga: Angeles University Foundation (AUF), Holy Angel University (HAU), City College of Angeles (CCA), and University of the Philippines Diliman Extension Programs in Pampanga and Olongapo (UPDEPPO). AUF, HAU, and CCA are the biggest tertiary education providers in Angeles City and as such could supply a representative number of participants for this research. Aside from CCA, professors from UPDEPPO in Clark, Pampanga were included as participants for the researcher to present a fuller picture of their lived experiences coping with the challenges of teaching remotely. This was done to include the experiences of professors teaching in public HEIs since AUF and HAU are both private academic tertiary institutions.

In addition, a minimum of three years of experience teaching business courses was used as a qualifier for the educators to noticeably determine how teaching remotely has challenged their usual pre-remote-learning teaching practices. Moreover, before this shift into remote learning, all the professors who contributed to this study have had no experience teaching online. However, during the course of this study, all had to conduct their lessons remotely using a combination of synchronous and asynchronous methods.

Initially, there were only ten professors who willingly shared their experiences during the start of the 1st semester of Academic Year 2020-2021. Towards the end of the semester, an additional fifteen business educators were recommended by their colleagues from the aforementioned HEIs, bringing the total to twenty-five participants.

The educators' age distribution is as follows: a majority (9) are aged 31-40, six (6) are aged 21-30, four (4) are aged 41-50, five (5) are aged 51-60, and one (1) aged 61-70 years old. In terms of which HEI they work for, the distribution of participants is as follows: seven teach at AUF, eleven are from HAU, five are from UPDEPPO, and the remaining two are from CCA. Of those teaching in AUF, one teaches economics courses, two teach accounting courses, one teaches marketing courses, one teaches management courses, and two teach

tourism management courses. Of the participants from HAU, one teaches business research, business statistics, and economics courses, another one teaches economics and management courses, two teach accounting, research, and taxation courses, five teach accounting courses, another teaches tourism and hospitality management courses, and one teaches purely economics courses. Of those from the UPDEPPO, one teaches human resources management and strategic management courses, one teaches accountancy and finance courses, another teaches economics and public management courses, another teaches economics courses including money and banking, and one teaches business law courses. Lastly, of the participants from CCA, one teaches economics and management courses, while the other teaches management, entrepreneurship, economics, business law, and business planning courses.

The subjects that these educators handle are core and professional major courses prescribed by the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) for business education degree-granting programs in the Philippines. Core courses involving basic knowledge that leads to the four functions of a business degree are subjects in the following areas: Human Resource Management, Operations Management, Marketing Management, and Financial Management. Professional major courses lay the fundamental concepts of business programs and are usually specialized subjects under the four basic areas. Tourism Management is an example of a professional major course, while Human Resources Management, Marketing, and Accountancy are examples of core courses. Economics, though not listed under any of the four core areas of business, is nonetheless a subject common to all business degree programs and is usually embedded in courses from the functional areas. These core and professional major business courses form the majority of the units required in a curriculum for a business degree. (CHED, 2017).

Given this information on the distribution of participants, the narratives were analyzed by clustering responses into two subgroups: age and the classification of HEI they work for, be it private or public.

Those whose ages are within the 21-40 year range, who for this study shall be termed junior faculty, were born in the digital age. As digital natives, they are well-versed in technology use and are



assumed to have transitioned into remote learning with less difficulty compared to the senior faculty. Senior faculty are those whose ages are within the range of 41-70 years old. Professors who belong to the senior faculty sub-group have been teaching for several years or even decades in a traditional setting and are presumed to find the shift to online platforms more challenging. Out of the twenty-five respondents, fifteen are junior faculty while the remaining ten are senior faculty.

Another subgroup considered in analyzing the narratives is the classification of the HEI the educators work for. The professors were grouped as to whether they belong to a private or a public academic institution regardless of whether they teach full-time or part-time. Educators in private HEIs are presumed to have access to more facilities that could aid them in teaching remotely such as a Learning Management System in place prior to this shift into remote learning. Additionally, it is assumed that private universities have more resources in terms of providing support to their employees. In contrast, the same may not be presumed for all public tertiary educational institutions since they only rely on government funding. The majority of the participants or a total of eighteen educators teach at private universities while the remaining seven are from public HEIs.

Looking at these sub-groups has helped assess if there were distinct challenges experienced or differing methods adopted by these educators depending on their age and the type of HEI they work for.

## **Findings and Discussion**

This section elaborates on the emerging themes that were discovered in this study.

### **Remote Learning Challenges**

Remote Learning has brought several challenges to educators in terms of how they can continue teaching despite the strict quarantines and suspension of residential classes. Among those faced by business educators in Angeles and in Clark, Pampanga during the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic were Issues on Connectivity and Access to Compatible Devices, Sudden Transition to Remote Learning Modality, One-way Stream of Learning and

Maintaining Student Interest, and Remote Learning's Toll on the Educators' Over-all Well-Being.

**Theme: Issues on Connectivity and Access to Compatible Devices**

Connectivity is an issue. In general, our communication infrastructure is still far from being desirable (nation-wide), and this makes teaching quite challenging. (Participant 7)

This instability in terms of connection to the internet challenged the educators because they experienced “*difficulty contacting students especially those that don't go online,*” as relayed by another participant. In relation to this, an educator answered:

Digital divide is one. Not everyone has [a] stable, fast internet connection. Some students missed scheduled activities because of this. The teacher has to repeat the lesson/activity so no one will be left behind. (Participant 25)

Teaching remotely through online platforms when both the student and the educators experience internet connectivity fluctuations was difficult because holding synchronous classes in this set-up is counter-productive. Instead of being able to discuss lessons, time is often consumed with having to re-log-in once disconnected, and this usually happens several times within a class. Also, some of the participants experienced frequent power interruptions which unavoidably impeded synchronous classes.

Aside from the internet and power connection issues, transferring content to suit these new platforms requires particular applications and compatible devices. Unfortunately, most professors do not have access to such teaching devices since running platforms like Zoom for example, require gadgets with higher specifications. One professor narrated:

[In] teaching remotely thru online platforms, [one had to] teach oneself in the use of different platforms/apps/online tools, [had] to upgrade/purchase teaching devices, [used] gadgets to improve screen and voice projection. (Participant 3)

Moreover, updating, modifying, and uploading teaching resources in a work-from-home set-up led to longer working hours. This, according to Participant 21, resulted in their personal gadgets being overused. Hence, the professors had to shoulder costly repairs if not buy an altogether new device to be able to make decent lectures online. Without these gadgets (e.g., laptops, video cameras, microphones, editing software, etc.), the presentation of lessons online would be uninteresting if not difficult. This was especially true for business courses that rely heavily on calculations like Accounting, Finance, and even Economics. In these courses, educators must show how a particular problem set needs to be computed for the students to gain better confidence in solving it themselves. For the course Economics, aside from the computations involved in some lessons, graphs to denote shifts or movements of the supply and demand curves are almost always incorporated in their lessons. Teaching students online in such cases entails the use of additional software like Light Board and the need to procure hardware such as drawing tablets.

It was noted that a total of fifteen participants mentioned issues on connectivity and access to compatible devices as a challenge in teaching business courses in this remote set-up. Of these 15 participants, four are classified as senior and eleven are junior faculty. Likewise, four of these participants are teaching in public HEIs while the remaining eleven work in private universities. This finding indicates that regardless of age and classification of HEI where the participants teach, a significant number found internet connectivity issues and lack of compatible devices challenging during this shift into remote learning. This is because internet connectivity in the Philippines is still slow and intermittent at best which is dreadfully problematic for holding classes synchronously. Moreover, gadgets and laptops that would be suitable for use in this remote set-up are priced steeply, making them financially burdensome for the educators to procure without assistance.

### **Theme: Sudden Transition to Remote Learning Modality**

Most of the professors received minimal training from June to July, training which could have prepared them to handle the transition to remote learning better. Because this transition happened abruptly, *"some professors do not even know how to make use of technology particularly the LMS,"* shared Participant 18. This is because some

are tech-averse and struggled to shift from the traditional classroom discussion to teaching remotely, be it in a synchronous or asynchronous modality. Another participant disclosed:

Everything is online. The admin requires [us] to come up with materials for the learners. [We] need to adjust the content of the course to meet the new platform. [We] need to adjust how topics are delivered. (Participant 1)

Assessment tools like quizzes and exams also needed to be recalibrated for online delivery. With the sudden migration of lessons and assessment methods into the online modality, educators were stretched, having to update and modify their teaching resources to suit these new channels within a span of one to two months only. This is very little time considering it usually takes years to develop an online course.

A total of 13 participants, of which five are classified as senior and eight are junior faculty, considered the sudden transition to online modality of learning as one of the difficulties they had to face. Of these 13 participants, five are business educators in public HEIs while the rest are teaching in private universities. This shows that the suddenness of the transition into remote learning platforms was deemed challenging across all sub-groups be it in terms of age or classification of HEI. Initially, it was expected that junior faculty members and educators from private universities would transition through this shift into the remote set-up better. Unfortunately, despite the fact that the junior faculty participants are digital natives, they still found this abrupt shift as challenging as did their senior colleagues. This finding also reveals that while private universities may have facilities such as an LMS already in use prior to the shift into remote modality, the educators still found the process of migrating their teaching resources as grueling as did those from public HEIs.

### **One-way Stream of Learning and Maintaining Student Interest**

According to Participant 11, with the shift into the remote modality of learning "*students are not enthusiastic during online classes, they are not that engaging (sic).*" For some reason, students adjust poorly:

[The] lack of interest [among] students in adapting ubiquitous and common use consumer electronics for academic purposes including software and service apps; [an] example [is] YouTube [which] is used for them to [learn] a new dance step to use for TikTok but to use it for a video research on history, interest is low. (Participant 15)

This same participant shared that this lack of interest *"to read prescribed materials and reliance on face-to-face video lecture[s] for their educational content consumption"* led to *"heavy reliance on a one-way stream of discussion"* instead of having conversational interactions which were common during face-to-face classes. Several other professors cited this lack of interest of the students or difficulty in maintaining their enthusiasm to learn as challenging. Furthermore, in a face-to-face set-up, it is easy to pinpoint who among the students are engaged during discussions. This is difficult to do in a remote setting, as mentioned by one participant:

[The] absence of FTF (face-to-face discussion) eliminates the "profiling" process of [checking whether] the concept is understood or not, which can be done FTF (face-to-face) by checking for clues, gestures, and non-verbal communication." (Participant 6)

Teachers rely on gestures and facial expressions to figure out who among the students perfectly understand the lesson, whose minds are busy daydreaming, and who are tentative to raise a question in class. Such cues are absent during asynchronous modality since the educators cannot see the students. Moreover, while the professors see the students online during synchronous classes, these cues are still not as clear as when class is facilitated in a residential setting. This is because although video conferencing allows seeing the facial expressions of the students, the educators are kept busy navigating these new platforms while holding discussions. To attempt to check on each student's screen for visual cues is not only difficult but also time-consuming. Add to that the many distractions which serve as a competition for the students' attention during synchronous classes such as the home being uncondusive for learning or dogs barking and roosters crowing in the background.

One educator answered:

Catching the attention of the students [is difficult]. No matter how well prepared the Professor or Instructor is, if the cycle of communication is not completed by any form of feedback (oral or written response) then there is no assurance that the instruction or teaching was effective. Add the barriers (noise, choppy lines etc.) on the part of the students that may hinder a seamless conduct of online instruction. (Participant 19)

Because this remote modality, in essence, promoted a one-way stream of learning, the students, as a consequence, were found to be less engaged in class discussions. A total of nine participants mentioned this challenge in their narratives. Three of these educators teach in public HEIs while the remaining six are from private academic institutions. Of these nine, four participants are senior faculty while the other five are classified as junior faculty. Hence, this finding shows that there was no perceived difference in terms of how educators lived through this challenge during the transition into remote learning. Both junior and senior faculty, regardless of where they teach, deemed the one-way stream of learning as uniformly challenging when maintaining student interest during the period of this study.

### **Remote Learning's Toll on Educators' Over-All Well-Being**

Like other groups of people, educators have also become anxious during this pandemic, worrying not only about their personal health and safety but also having to consider the general well-being of their students. Participant 25 mentioned that *"the pandemic has made everyone more vulnerable and more sensitive."* Thus, professors *"need to be more patient in handling the students"*. Most educators have recognized the need to exercise compassion in terms of the tasks they give their students to avoid contributing to the students' already high stress levels. This is because like their professors, the students were forced to study remotely and grapple with the demands of learning through an online modality. Aside from experiencing "Zoom fatigue" due to staying glued online for several hours attending synchronous classes daily, students found themselves needing to learn from piles of reading assignments. With these in mind, the educators had to set aside their personal stress

and anxiety while trying to strike a balance between the need to fulfill their role of facilitating learning and the need to be considerate to their students. This constant rebalancing of duties and consideration is stressful since educators had to incessantly rethink and adjust their teaching and assessing strategies. Because of this, educators like Participant 22 mentioned how “*staying motivated*” was challenging for them. Related to this, another stated:

[This] pandemic is taking a toll on my physical and psychological wellbeing. [This] work from home set up [is] blurring the lines of work and rest. This is taking [a] toll on my holistic health. Our mobility has been reduced and it's affecting how we function as teachers. Home for me is a place where we can detach from work and it is a private place where we can just be ourselves. The work from home setting took that out from everyone." (Participant 8)

In a pre-COVID set-up, it was easy for these educators to separate their work from their personal lives. Because of the need to stay and work at home, the personal and professional aspects of their lives have inevitably mixed. Some educators had to move their working hours late at night up to the wee hours of the morning because they had to do tasks at home such as tending to the children during the day.

This particular challenge, the toll of online learning on educators' overall well-being, was disclosed by two junior faculty and one senior faculty who teach in private Higher Educational Institutions. Thus, the age of the educators was considered immaterial in differentiating the experiences of these participants living through this challenge. This finding came as a surprise since it disproved the presumption that educators in private HEIs receive more support from their organizations and were therefore presumed to have less difficulty transitioning into remote modalities of learning. In fact, no professor from public HEIs mentioned this as a difficulty they encountered while teaching remotely.

### **Challenges Unique to Teaching Business Courses**

Based on the participants' responses, the challenges brought about by the perceived uniqueness of teaching business courses during the period of this study were negligible if any. Most of the participants' narratives point to general teaching challenges with a specific

application to a business background such as the need for students to be immersed physically in the field like going on practicums, doing laboratory work, and attending educational trips. These types of activities, if conducted remotely, will not have the same effect as when done in a traditional setting.

Moreover, some of the HEIs where the educators worked for disseminated memoranda ordering that professors temporarily avoid these types of requirements, particularly those that would require the students to go outside. Aside from adhering to memos from their HEIs, most professors decided to discontinue fieldwork to ensure the health and safety of their students. For laboratory work, professors had to be creative in recalibrating their requirements by allowing the show of practical skills such as bartending or cooking through video recordings.

### **Methods Adopted to Cope with the Challenges Encountered**

Listed below are the methods adopted by business educators in Angeles and in Clark, Pampanga to cope with the consequential shift to remote learning during the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic. These methods were Video Recordings and Video Conferencing, Assessment Tools Adjustment, and Attending Webinars and Training.

### **Video Recordings and Video Conferencing**

Most educators adopted a blended or a combination of synchronous and asynchronous modalities. A few, like Participant 18, uploaded pre-recorded videos of their lessons into their universities' LMS, and used Zoom meetings *"for integrating the discussion."* Zoom Virtual Meetings and Google Meet were the usual applications used for holding synchronous sessions via video conferencing. Participant 6 preferred this method because according to him *"at least we can see the face (of students). Though body language reading is not evident."* Some like Participant 4, opted to record in advance, snippets of their lessons into videos to save time. Another made use of available *"2-minute clips, like that of Twitter, or at most (a) 10-minute short-form video in YouTube similar to [a] Crash Course or Ted [Ed] videos for lessons in economics."* These shared narratives are similar to what another educator disclosed:



Technically, I resort to available resources from the web which are credible and reliable. Most importantly, I try to contextualize the topics with the current situation. I also do my own content for uploading so students can access them anytime. (Participant 7)

Together with other educational materials valuable for an asynchronous mode of learning, these videos are uploaded into the Learning Management System (LMS) prescribed by their academic institutions. These methods gave students the choice among attending a fully synchronous class, studying at their own pace asynchronously, or learning through a combination of both synchronous and asynchronous modalities.

A total of ten participants, seven of whom are junior while three are senior faculty, resorted to video recordings and video conferencing to be able to teach remotely. Of these ten, two teach at public HEIs while the remaining eight are employed as professors in private universities. This finding shows how professors, regardless of age and classification of HEI, similarly coped with the challenges of the transition. Since the professors could not meet their students in a residential setting, this method served as the primary means through which the situation was addressed whether the participants taught synchronously, asynchronously, or a combination of both.

### **Assessment Tools Adjustment**

Given the new learning modality, the assessment methods educators were accustomed to using for residential classes such as quizzes, exams, and final papers about companies as case laboratories were rendered unbecoming. Participant 17 shared that "*we have to be innovative in thinking [of] what activities to give*". Educators needed to be more creative in coming up with intellectually stimulating requirements that would elicit the learning outcomes they intended without contributing to the growing anxiety of their students. A reduction in the number of requirements was done in consideration of the mental well-being of students and because the ongoing quarantine deterred students from being able to conduct fieldwork. Moreover, instead of the usual face-to-face presentation, one professor had to innovate:

In presentation in (sic) their product, I just instructed them to video record. (Participant 14)

This permitted the students to show how their products worked without having to rely heavily on synchronous meetings with their professors. Since not all students could afford to use the internet for lengthy online meetings, allowing recorded presentations was a very considerate alternative. Feedback about the students' presentation was provided by the professors later on, usually via email or through Zoom consultations. Lastly, exams were recalibrated to suit online delivery. Participant 9 opted for "*submission of soft copies.*" In addition, most professors allowed longer time periods for submission to accommodate those who might be experiencing internet or power fluctuations. This, however, led educators to avoid objective types of exams and instead utilize more situational and essay types of tests. This was because administering these types of assessments was not only a better fit online but also because these methods could help minimize if not deter students from cheating by searching answers online.

The narratives presented above were recorded from four junior and three senior faculty who mentioned that they adjusted their assessment tools to address the challenges of needing to shift to remote learning. Of these seven participants, two are from public academic institutions and five are teaching at private HEIs. This finding shows that both junior and senior faculty teaching in either public or private HEIs made use of this method in coping with the transition. Thus, assessment tool adjustment was done across all sub-groups during this transition into remote modality, indicating no difference in the coping method adopted by the participants.

### **Attending Webinars and Training**

To capacitate themselves to manage the challenges of remote learning better, educators had to attend various types of online training. Participant 8 shared that this, indeed, was one of the things he had to do: "*continuous learning: I have been attending countless free webinars and training to keep myself abreast of the current situation.*" These webinars have greatly helped educators learn new strategies as specific as navigating a particular LMS such as Canvass or as general as learning life skills that can make professors thrive better in these difficult circumstances. Another professor shared

that webinars with topics such as *"how to use effectively and efficiently the LMS of the university and different social media like Google Meet"* were useful in preparing them to ease into teaching remotely. Aside from training in navigating various platforms used for remote learning, the best practices of those who had already experienced teaching in this modality were also shared through these webinars.

Four educators disclosed that they used webinars and training in managing the challenges they encountered while teaching remotely. Two of these participants are classified as junior and the other two are senior faculty. Of these four participants, three teach at private universities and one teaches at a public HEI. This again shows how there was no difference with how the educators attempted to cope with the challenges of the transition. The participants, regardless of age and classification of HEI they work for, have attended several webinars and trainings in preparation, even as the transition to remote modality was ongoing. Through this method, the educators improved their capability of facing the challenges of the transition.

### **Faculty Support Needed from Higher Educational Institutions**

When asked how their institutions extended help to address the challenges they encountered, the participants stated that their HEIs gave free training through webinars, provided a Learning Management System, and allowed them to teach from home. Given this response and after a follow-up question on how they thought the HEIs could further support them during this period, the participants recommended the following: Providing Assistance to Ensure Access to a Stable Internet Connection and Helping Procure Compatible Devices, Granting Access to Educational Resources Online, and Showing Organizational Support for their Over-all Well-being.

### **Providing Assistance to Ensure Access to a Stable Internet Connection and Helping Procure Compatible Devices**

Since online learning was seen as a solution to continuing education amidst the pandemic, Higher Educational Institutions must ensure access to stable internet and guarantee the availability of compatible devices for learners and educators alike. Participant 6 recommended that HEIs should *"ensure [a] stable internet*

*connection and equip professors with technological tools". "It could have been far better if faculty would also be supported in terms of hardware and other software support related tools in creating web-based content to be used in online class", said another. Another participant mentioned:*

[HEIs should] provide for free the upgraded teaching devices/tools/gadgets needed by the prof[essors].  
(Participant 3)

This recommendation was seen by the participants as a necessary form of support from their HEIs. In a residential setting, almost everything is provided by the academic institutions including but not limited to whiteboards and pens, projectors or LED TVs to cast lessons, and electricity. In this new setting, everything is left to the educator. Professors had to use their own resources, including internet subscription, electricity, and compatible devices such as laptops and tablets. Some of the devices they had were not even suited for the demands of remote learning. The educators wanted the HEIs to recognize this and provide the important tools and basic utilities needed to be able to teach effectively in a home set up. Thus, one participant answered:

I suggest that instructors be allowed to use the university facilities in our online or distance learning, with internet connectivity and all and no distractions. (Participant 20)

HEIs providing access to a more stable internet connection, and ensuring that educators have available devices to use in this remote modality was suggested by seven participants, two of whom are junior faculty while five are classified as senior faculty. From these seven educators, three teach at a public academic institution while the rest are employed in private universities. Thus, across all sub-groups, the educators uniformly wanted their HEIs to provide support this way. This finding has once again disproved the presumption that educators in private HEIs were supported by their organizations in transitioning through this period better. While private universities usually have better facilities than their public counterparts, these facilities were located and accessible in-campus. The nature of the new modality, on the other hand, requires that the participants continue teaching at home. Professors from private

universities had to pay for these devices and internet connection from their own pockets just like educators from public HEIs did.

### **Granting Access to Educational Resources Online**

Before the shutdown of residential classes, libraries were able to supplement the educators' learning resources. Because of the sudden transition into the remote set-up, library resources became unsuitable for the new modality. Educational resources must *"be made available online to both educators and students,"* suggested Participant 2. This pertains to learning materials such as digital copies of textbooks and journals, among others, being available for browsing or downloading online, thus, ensuring accessibility to both learners and educators alike.

Moreover, Participant 18 suggested *"more exhaustive training"*. This is similar to what Participant 9 recommended when he said that *"extensive training should be provided to [educators] so that we will be prepared when conducting [online] classes."* Training can take the form of tutorial videos uploaded into the university's LMS or webinars hosted by the HEIs on topics that could help equip educators. These include but are not limited to video editing and online teaching effectiveness. HEIs must prioritize this because educators who were effective in teaching residential classes are not automatically effective in teaching remotely. The latter requires a different set of skills, and the professors thought that more training could help address that. Moreover, uploading video tutorials into the HEI's LMS can provide flexibility for educators in that they can access these resources during their free time and at the pace they desire. Another professor remarked:

[HEIs should] always prepare the educators technically, mentally and spiritually before the start and end of each semester. Online training and webinars is the best way to conduct these. (Participant 19)

Three junior and three senior faculty mentioned granting access to educational resources online as an important form of support academic institutions may provide for their educators. Of these six participants, one teaches at a public HEI, and the remaining five teach at a private academic institution. This finding demonstrates the universality of training in helping educators cope with the

challenges of this transition. This is because educators from all ages and from both public and private HEIs suggested that their academic institutions offer this to their employees. Although there were universities that provided training as the education sector shifted into remote modality, the participants felt that these were insufficient and mostly done swiftly during the start of the semester. Hence, the professors recommended that training be continuous to help remedy the situation. Lastly, if HEIs provide access to educational resources aside from training, this could help the educators in performing their adjunct tasks, particularly their research endeavors.

### **Showing Organizational Support for the Over-All Health and Well-Being of Educators**

Stress arising from dealing with the remote set-up coupled with pandemic anxiety, has levied a huge toll on the welfare of the educators.

*"A support system is essential. It almost makes the work half easier,"* said Participant 22. This may be achieved through *"constant communication [with] and consideration [by] school administrators,"* shared another. Likewise, academic institutions should make their employees feel valued during these times by showing concern for the educators' overall health and well-being. This is important since both the educators' physical and mental fitness are necessary to facilitate learning. A simple check-up on how educators are coping during this stressful period will be greatly beneficial since it will be seen as a gesture of support, and therefore, boost employee morale. One professor suggested:

I think one way that HAU can better help its employees and faculty is when they address how we are coping as individuals in our own family or community. We are not all equipped the same way and its (sic) also important how the employer would check how we are doing during these times. (Participant 8)

This recommendation for the academic institutions to show support for their educators' overall-health and well-being was noted from four junior faculty participants teaching in private HEIs. Notably, no senior faculty from either public or private HEIs mentioned this in

their narratives. This finding signifies how the younger educators look up to their organizations, through their administrators, for support and motivation. If the HEIs show concern for the well-being of their employees, the participants would feel that their hard work is reciprocated through this show of concern for their welfare.

## **Conclusion**

As was evident from the lived experiences of the participants in this study, the consequential shift into remote learning has transformed the usual delivery of tertiary education in certain higher educational institutions in Angeles and in Clark, Pampanga. While remote learning has long been an alternative to the traditional classroom set-up, the experiences shared in this study have nonetheless reinforced its applicability in different situations especially during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Moreover, the hastened leap towards remote learning has promoted a learner-centered approach compared to the teacher-centric method used before this transition. In a residential or classroom setting, the responsibility to facilitate learning rests mostly on the shoulders of the educators. With the transition into remote modality, teacher dependence through long class discussions was made unfeasible since synchronous classes had been limited. As such, most students had to study asynchronously and were compelled to become responsible for their own learning. The professors, too, had to learn to let go of the reins and trust that their students could learn independently, as long as they provided the necessary learning materials and ensured that these were sufficient and appropriate. What is clear is that with this abrupt shift into remote learning, the responsibility to learn is not equally shared by the educators and their students anymore. Now more than ever, students are required to take a more active role in that responsibility.

It can be noted, however, that facilitating factors in learning, such as ensuring the readiness and motivation of educators to teach in this setup, modifying assessment tools to suit online delivery, and making learning resources available online, among other factors that were shared in this study, were challenging for the educators because of the haste in transition. It can be argued that had there been ample time to prepare for such a shift, coping with these

challenges would have been less difficult for the educators. This is where the support of the HEIs as suggested in this study may come in. By continuing to ensure the readiness of their educators, be it in the form of training to increase their capabilities, guaranteeing their health and wellness to teach, and giving assistance or subsidies to procure devices including utilities needed to facilitate their duties, the challenges brought about by this abrupt shift into remote learning will be mitigated if not eliminated.

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## Appendix A

### *Participants of the Study*

	Range of Age	Higher Educational Institution	Business Courses Facilitated Remotely
<b>Participant 1</b>	31-40	HAU (Holy Angel University)	Business Research, Business Statistics, and Economics
<b>Participant 2</b>	31-40	UPDEPPO (UP Diliman Extension Programs in Pampanga and Olongapo)	Human Resources Management and Strategic Management
<b>Participant 3</b>	61-70	UPDEPPO (UP Diliman Extension Programs in Pampanga and Olongapo)	Accounting and Financial Management
<b>Participant 4</b>	31-40	HAU (Holy Angel University)	Economics
<b>Participant 5</b>	21-30	AUF (Angeles University Foundation)	Tourism Management
<b>Participant 6</b>	31-40	UPDEPPO (UP Diliman Extension Programs in Pampanga and Olongapo)	Economics
<b>Participant 7</b>	50-60	AUF (Angeles University Foundation)	Economics
<b>Participant 8</b>	31-40	HAU (Holy Angel University)	Hotel and Restaurant Management
<b>Participant 9</b>	21-30	AUF (Angeles University Foundation)	Accounting
<b>Participant 10</b>	31-40	AUF (Angeles University Foundation)	Hotel and Restaurant Management
<b>Participant 11</b>	41-50	UPDEPPO (UP Diliman Extension Programs in Pampanga and Olongapo)	Economics
<b>Participant 12</b>	31-40	AUF (Angeles University Foundation)	Accounting
<b>Participant 13</b>	21-30	AUF (Angeles University Foundation)	Marketing Management
<b>Participant 14</b>	21-30	City College of Angeles (CCA)	Business Management
<b>Participant 15</b>	41-50	City College of Angeles (CCA)	Economics, Entrepreneurship, Business Plan, Management Science, Business Law
<b>Participant 16</b>	50-60	HAU (Holy Angel University)	Accounting
<b>Participant 17</b>	41-50	HAU (Holy Angel University)	Economics and other Management courses
<b>Participant 18</b>	50-60	HAU (Holy Angel University)	Accounting
<b>Participant 19</b>	31-40	HAU (Holy Angel University)	Taxation, Accounting, Research
<b>Participant 20</b>	50-60	HAU (Holy Angel University)	Accounting
<b>Participant 21</b>	21-30	HAU (Holy Angel University)	Accounting
<b>Participant 22</b>	31-40	HAU (Holy Angel University)	Accounting
<b>Participant 23</b>	21-30	HAU (Holy Angel University)	Accounting and Taxation
<b>Participant 24</b>	50-60	UPDEPPO (UP Diliman Extension Programs in Pampanga and Olongapo)	Business Law
<b>Participant 25</b>	41-50	AUF (Angeles University Foundation)	Hotel and Restaurant Management

## Appendix B

### *Developing Themes on Remote Teaching Challenges Encountered*

Sample Response	Coded Description	Theme
"Connectivity is an issue... and this makes teaching quite challenging"	Internet Connection Issues	<b>Issues on Connectivity and Access to Compatible Devices</b>
"...had to upgrade and purchase teaching devices, (and make) use of (these) gadgets to improve screen and voice projection"	Issues on Compatible Devices (gadgets)	
"(We) need to adjust the content of the course to meet the new platform. (We) need to adjust how topics are delivered."	making resources suitable for online delivery	<b>Sudden Transition to Remote Learning Modality</b>
"Keepin interest of the students high.", "...the cycle of communication is not completed by any form of feedback then there is no assurance that the instruction or teaching was effective. Add the barriers (noise, choppy lines etc) ... on the part of the students that may hinder a seamless conduct of online instruction. "Absence of FTF (face-to-face discussion) eliminates the "profiling" process of (checking whether) the concept is understood or not.	lack of student interest, maintaining student enthusiasm, one way stream of communication, absence of non-verbal cues	<b>One-way Stream of Learning and Maintaining Student Interest</b>
"... this pandemic is taking (a) toll on my holistic health. Home for me is a place where we can	stress taking a toll on educators' physical and mental health, and personal life intermixing	<b>Toll on Overall Well being</b>

### *Developing Themes on Methods Adopted to Cope with the Challenges Encountered*

Sample Response	Coded Description	Theme
"... I try to contextualize the topics with the current situation. I also do my own content for	Uploading Videos of Lessons into the LMS and Sync classes via conferencing	<b>Videos</b>
"Made changes to the required output given the lack to(of) access of(to) resources..., and adjusted measures of assessment"	recalibrating and reducing number of requirements to suit remote delivery	<b>Assessment Tools Adjustments</b>
"I have been attending to countless free webinars and training to keep myself abreast of the current situation"	learn new teaching and coping strategies	<b>Attending Webinars/Trainings</b>

*Developing Themes on How the HEIs May Best Support Educators in Coping with the Challenges Encountered*

<b>Sample Response</b>	<b>Coded Description</b>	<b>Theme</b>
"Provide for free the upgraded teaching devices/tools/gadgets needed by the profs."	provide the important tools and basic utilities needed for educators to conduct their jobs in a home set up	<b>Providing Assistance to Ensure Access to a Stable Internet Connection and Helping Procure Compatible Devices</b>
"provide access to educational resources for educators and students"	access to digital copies of learning resources and other supplemental materials	<b>Granting Access to Educational Resources Online</b>
"Prior to start of the semester, extensive trainings be provided to us so that we will be prepared when conducting the classes."	more and continued training to help equip professors transition into remote modality	
"it's also important how the employer would check how we (employees) are doing during these times."	show of concern and gesture of support	<b>Showing Organizational Support for the Over-All Health &amp; Well-Being of Educators</b>