The Teaching of Reading and Writing as a Subject in Virtual Classroom: A Case Study

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ABSTRACT

This study focused on the investigation of the teaching of Reading and Writing as a subject in the virtual classroom. Four teachers from laboratory and private schools who were teaching Reading and Writing subject in the virtual classroom during the time of pandemic were the participants of the study. Semi-structured interviews supplemented with documents including recorded class discussions, instructional materials, study guides, flexible learning plans, class records and other related documents were used for triangulation to fortify the credibility of findings. A compilation of research findings from the four cases were presented and yielded five emerging themes through cross-case analysis; utilization of Most Essential Learning Competencies (MELCs), connection issues, lack of interaction and academic dishonesty, access to digital environments, ensuring skill development and lesson discussion enrichment, and students' performance. Each theme was discussed and supported by extract of the participants' responses and related literature. This study is relevant to the teachers teaching Reading and Writing as a subject as the results explicate ideas on how to improve their teaching pedagogy especially in the use of virtual classrooms. This case study provides insights on the practices of the Reading and Writing teachers using virtual classrooms in teaching the subject.

KEYWORDS: *Reading and Writing as a subject, virtual classroom, Most Essential Learning Competencies*

INTRODUCTION

The teaching of Reading and Writing as a subject has evolved from being taught in traditional face to face to the virtual classroom. This being part of English language teaching has brought both positive and negative experiences to the teachers as well as the students (Cornelius, 2014; Hugo & Moncada, 2010). Numerous studies conducted in teaching English language in the virtual classrooms showed that virtual classrooms allow active and positive teaching environment and development on speaking fluency, vocabulary, grammatical and sentence pattern constructions (Satpute, 2021; Omer, 2021; Manegre & Sabiri, 2020; Kamil, 2021). However, many of the studies also emphasized the negative experiences of teachers and students in the use of virtual classroom in English classes which shows difficulties on the development of reading and listening skills and the platform is not so beneficial to English language learners (Persson, 2020; Jones, 2021; Perveen, 2016). Presently, although there are various studies which focused on English language teaching in virtual classroom but no studies had been conducted about the use of virtual classroom in teaching Reading and Writing as a subject. Thus, this case study investigated on the teaching of Reading and Writing as a subject in the virtual classroom.

In the global scenario, the use of virtual classroom is very evident in teaching English language as shown in various researches. Although most of the findings showed promising results and experiences, there are also studies that revealed some undesirable impacts. The study of Walinsudara (2021) on teaching English for Academic Purposes in virtual classrooms in Sri Lanka showed that participants preferred in-class teaching presence and pedagogy more than the virtual teaching for academic writing skills. This is supported by the studies in Iraq, India, Spain, Taiwan, Jakarta, China and Saudi Arabia that teaching English language in virtual classroom posed positive approach for teachers and students and create positive teaching environment, develop speaking fluency in oral communication, improves basic language knowledge, reading comprehension and reading and writing skills and students could learn from others' thinking methods while appreciating and criticizing their writing (Kamil, 2021; Yumnam, 2021; Manegre and Sabiri, 2020; Wang, Chang, Lin & Chin, 2018; Dewi, Zahrowati, Sulistyawati, 2019; Huo, 2019; Omer, 2021). However, in Sweden, when the four language skills like listening, speaking, reading and writing were being examined in distance education through computer-mediated communication, it found out that students have experienced difficulties on developing reading and listening skills and lack of non-verbal interaction which resulted to turn-taking (Persson, 2020). Some studies also in Minnesota and Pakistan revealed that students did not show positive progression in their reading abilities and that there are some limitations in terms of using virtual classrooms in teaching English language (Jones, 2021; Perveen, 2016).

In the Philippines, the academe has also rapidly switched from in-person to distance learning in order to prevent widespread transmission of the virus. The Department of Education (DepEd) has determined Modular Distance Learning as part of the initiative of its Basic Education Learning Continuity Plan (BE-LCP) in response to the public health emergency brought by COVID-19. This initiative aims to ensure that learning opportunities are provided to learners in safe manner, through different learning delivery (DepEd Order No.18, s.2020). In the case of Commission on Higher Education (CHED), it mandated the exploration of other innovative learning modalities that will facilitate migration from traditional to flexible teaching and learning options. These options include off-line, blended and online. Off-line modality makes use of printed modules, storage devices, learning packets and the like, blended learning made use of the combination of desktop computer, laptop, smartphone, mobile applications, virtual learning and others and on-line which made use of electronic modules, mainly use the internet – based technology and modules, the use of digital platform and others (CHED Memo Order No.4, s.2020). While the two big agencies, DepEd and CHED, have these initiatives, most of the private educational institutions have adopted to online learning which made use of various Learning Management Systems (LMS). With this new trend in education, studies in the Philippines concerning English language teaching with the use of virtual classrooms are also evident. Studies relative to this in Bulacan, Laguna and Manila showed that the use of virtual classroom in English language teaching can promote time management, convenience, and enhancement of teaching and learning (Farnacisco & Barcelona, 2020; Tarrayo, Paz, Gepila; 2021). Students have diverse estimations and attitudes towards the contemporary process of language learning using the platform and both novice and experienced teachers have positive views in overall language learning and achievement. Although these shows encouraging results, it also revealed that there are crucial concerns including comprehension of language content, student engagement, time pressured and

internet connectivity (Francisco & Barcelona, 2020; Yango, Bermudo, Quendangan, 2019; Dela Rosa, 2016).

These shifts from across the globe and in the Philippines are manifested in the current context. In fact, in the province of Bukidnon, the private, public and laboratory schools have also adopted to these various modalities in order to continue the learning delivery to its clientele. In one of the schools to be investigated in this study which is a laboratory school, online learning is being used in the delivery of instruction. It utilizes Google Meet and Google Classroom in the delivery of its instruction. Google Meet is integrated in the Google Classroom where a teacher can create a unique Google Meet link for each of his/her classes in Google Classroom. These platforms are included in G Suite for Education (source.mpls.k12.mn.us). The other school part in this study which is a private school, uses a Learning Management System (LMS) called Edu Learn Technologies. This LMS is a technology company focused on delivering smart, sensible, and sustainable technology solutions that capably addresses customer needs (edulearntechnologies.com). The laboratory school and private school mentioned have used virtual classrooms to attain quality delivery of teaching in this pandemic time. The virtual classrooms are being utilized in all of the subjects but for the purpose of this study, it will only focus on the use of virtual classroom in the teaching of Reading and Writing as a subject.

Considering the present situation, it is apparent that more education institutions are shifting to online learning to cope with the new. Migrating physical classroom to virtual classroom has posed various challenges especially for Reading and Writing teachers. It is not certain if these teachers are ready to shift with the virtual classroom during new normal. This study is relevant to the teachers teaching Reading and Writing as a subject as the results will give them idea on how to improve their teaching pedagogy especially in the use of virtual classrooms. This case study will provide insights on the practices of the Reading and Writing teachers using virtual classrooms in teaching the subject.

Thus, this study aimed at exploring the teaching of Reading and Writing as a subject in the virtual classroom. Specifically, this study sought to answer the following research questions: (1) How do teachers prepare in terms of content, assessment, instructional materials, strategies and references in teaching the subject? (2) What are the challenges and opportunities in teaching Reading and Writing as a subject in a virtual classroom? (3) How do teachers overcome the challenges encountered in teaching Reading and Writing as a subject in virtual classroom? and (4) How does the teaching of Reading and Writing as a subject in virtual classroom affect students' performance?

LITERATURE REVIEW

This adoption to virtual learning delivery also poses consideration to the subjects being offered by educational institutions. One subject that is to be taken into consideration is Reading and Writing because it entails process in developing the skills. Reading and Writing subject being one of the core subjects offered in the Senior High School is offered in the Grade 11 curriculum. This subject aimed at developing reading and writing skills as applied to a wide range of materials other than poetry, fiction and drama. The learners are expected to critique sample written work and produce academic and professional writings following

properties of a well-written text and process approach to writing (deped.gov.ph). The reading and writing skills are very important to be acquired by senior high school students as this would help them be at par with the global learners. The dominant skill being developed in this subject is writing as evident in the competencies prescribed by DepEd. One approach utilized by teachers in developing writing skills is process approach. Process approach to writing is where learners are given the opportunity to focus on the process by which they produce their output (Onozawa, 2010). This approach in writing is predominantly having to do with linguistic skills such as planning and drafting, and there is much less emphasis on linguistic knowledge, such as knowledge about grammar and text structure (Badger & White, 1999).

Virtual classrooms are web-based systems serve as learning platforms that contain several features for optimal learning environments (Charles & Babatunde, 2014). These are online environments that allow students and instructors to communicate synchronously using audio, video, chat, interactive whiteboard, application sharing, instant polling, etc. These features enable faculty and students to interact as if they were face to face in a classroom. Participants can talk to each other, view each other through a webcam, use emoticons, and work together in breakout rooms. These virtual classrooms come in several forms like Zoom, Google Classroom, Google Meet, Microsoft Teams, Quipper, Schoology, Moodle, Edu Learn Technologies and others (Mitchell, 2021).

The virtual classrooms have gained prominence during COVID-19 pandemic, as they were the most applicable alternative to solving the problem of students not being in the regular classrooms (Zhang, 2019). The delivery of instructions using the virtual classrooms is not always parallel in all subjects. Teachers need to vary their strategies in order to catch the students' attention and also to make sure that the target skill will be attained. In teaching Reading and Writing as a subject in the use of virtual classroom, this also takes strategy to achieve required competencies as this requires process. In the face to face set up, the teacher would monitor the progress of the students' work and within the process, feedback is given. According to Lamb and Parrott (2019), the digital and mediated paraphernalia are increasingly not only adding to reading experience but becoming essential to it. Teachers and students avail to all the collaborative possibilities of online submissions, including hyperlinks, embedded video, direct links to sources, video and audio responses to students, submission records, and the ability for students to collaborate. This is supported by the study of Ng & Or (2020) where it explored the use of virtual classrooms during the COVID-19 pandemic, it showed that the use of virtual classrooms assisted in narrowing the gap between the theoretical aspects and their practical application which led to the improvement in skill performance.

Moreover, these virtual classrooms are considered as one of the most important interactive learning environments, and this is due to the many features available in virtual reality environments. It contains discussion rooms, independent small groups that give students the opportunity to accomplish a specific task cooperatively. The employment of virtual classrooms in the academe is very beneficial in the continuity of learning for both teachers and learners not only in the Philippines but also around the globe. These applications provide flexible methods of learning and allow the practice of educational activities that may be difficult to practice in the traditional learning environment (Albastawi & Al Bataineh, 2020). It also provides rich environments for digital multimedia that can be relied upon to support

visual learning (Alharthi, 2021). Omer's (2021) study on the impact of teaching English through online virtual classes which showed that the levels of students in speaking fluency developed dramatically in which it recommends that there is a need to organize effective speaking program to develop students' English speaking fluency using various online platforms. In the same perspective, it also revealed in the study of Perveen (2016) that the blend of both synchronous and asynchronous paradigms in virtual classroom means to create an ideal environment for e-language learning in Pakistan.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

DESIGN

This case study was a descriptive and used a multiple case study approach. Case study research means conducting an empirical investigation of a contemporary phenomenon within its natural context using multiple sources of evidence (Yin, 2009) and designed to provide an intensive, holistic description and analysis of a specific phenomenon (Merriam, 1998 as cited by Yazan, 2015). For the purpose of this study, this utilized the multiple case study to understand the differences and similarities between cases. The multiple case study approach allowed the researcher to use cross-case analysis in finding out relevant emerging themes (Yin, 2009; Baxter & Jack, 2008; Stake 2013).

CASE SELECTION

There were no fixed criteria for how many instances should be included in a multiple case study to fulfill the replication strategy's requirements. Instead, the number of cases determines the sample size necessary to reach saturation, or if no substantial new findings are obtained (Yin, 2009; Zach, 2006). In this case study, the sample of four teachers who are teaching Reading and Writing as a subject using virtual classrooms were selected. The inclusion criteria were stated in the research participants.

PARTICIPANTS AND SAMPLING TECHNIQUE

The selection of participants followed the purposive sampling which is generally used in case study research. This was appropriate to be used in the study as this sampling selected participants who were fitted for the profile of the participants needed to be included in the study (Patton, 1999). Following the sampling, this was the selection criteria for participants; (a) teachers are employed in schools within Bukidnon, Philippines (b) teachers are senior high school teachers teaching Reading and Writing as a subject using virtual classrooms, (c) teachers are teaching in the laboratory and private schools, and (d) teachers are novice teachers who have teaching experience of five years below.

DATA COLLECTION

The data collection in this case study was extensive drawing on multiple sources. As Yin (2003) recommends, there are six types of collecting information; these are documents, archival records, interviews, direct observations, participant-observations and physical artifacts. In this case study, the researcher used semi-structured interviews, focus group

discussions and observations. It also utilized the recorded discussions of the teachers, instructional materials, study guides, flexible learning plans and their class records. The use of these multiple sources of data from multiple data collection methods allowed the researcher triangulate themes that emerged from the data (Patton, 1999).

DATA ANALYSIS

Coding of the observation notes and interviews were used to identify the major themes which was done in every case. Then, cross-case analysis was employed for further triangulation to come up with the cross-case findings. By identifying issues within each case and then looking for common themes that transcend among the cases was indispensable in multi-case study (Yin, 2009). The use of different data sources in this study was used for triangulation purposes.

RESEARCH RIGOR

Trustworthiness in qualitative research was essential because it demonstrated that findings of the study authentically reflect meanings described by the participants in the study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985 as cited in Nowell et.al, 2017). Credibility was ensured through triangulation (Merriam, 2009) which made use of data sources like documentation, instructional materials, study guides, flexible learning plans, class records and other relevant documents to cross check the trustworthiness of the information in the study. Each participant was given a pseudonym to protect their identity and information was kept confidential.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

In conducting the study, the researcher observed required protocol in the conduct of the research to ensure quality and reliability of research findings. Prior to the interviews, focus group discussions and observations, informed consent forms were distributed to the participants where objectives of the study, risks and benefits, confidentiality clause and statement of participation were included. The required disclosure and ethical requirements were observed and proper documentation was complied.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This case study was guided by the four research questions. The cases were named based on the given pseudonym of each participant. The presentation of findings followed the four research questions. These findings presented the themes emerged in all cases which was part of cross-case analysis.

CROSS-CASE ANALYSIS

This study was directed by the research questions which focused on the preparation of teachers teaching Reading and Writing as a subject in the virtual classroom in terms of content, assessment, instructional materials, strategies and references in teaching the subject; their challenges and opportunities encountered in teaching Reading and Writing as a subject

in a virtual classroom; their coping strategies on the challenges encountered in teaching Reading and Writing as a subject in virtual classroom; and the students' performance in teaching the subject in the virtual classroom. Data from all the four cases were compared and synthesized as applicable in the cross-case analysis. Codes were developed during cross-case analysis and finally there were five themes emerged.

Theme 1: Utilization of Most Essential Learning Competencies (MELCs)

With the disruption brought by pandemic, the schools had adapted to the different modes of learning and also to the competencies being followed. Whatever the modes of learning delivery being used, it would always refer to the prescribed competencies. With regards to the teachers' preparation in terms of content, assessment, strategies and references, the utilization of the Most Essential Learning Competencies (MELCs) is being followed in the teaching of Reading and Writing as a subject in the virtual classroom.

These are the participants' statements:

> *When preparing the lesson, we based everything in the Most Essential Learning Competencies (MELCs). Firstly, content and assessment are guided with MELCs. (Jean)*

> **"***Preparation starts with checking the Learning Plan – the guide we use in order to see the topics, lessons, values, activities and the links and references that we can use which is anchored on the Most Essential Learning Competencies (MELCs). (Alex)*

> *The preparation of content, assessment, instructional materials, strategies and references in teaching the Reading and Writing subject are always guided by the Most Essential Learning Competencies (MELCs) and from that I utilized the materials provided by the Edu Learn Technologies which is the official LMS of the school. (Dina)*

> *I am able to prepare my lesson with the guidance of MELCs, it's there where we should start. That is in terms of content and assessment. The instructional materials are teacher-made and others are from our LMS which is the Edu Learn Technologies. (Rita)*

In response to the public health emergency caused by COVID-19, the Department of Education (DepEd) adopt the Most Essential Learning Competencies (MELCs) as part of its Basic Education Learning Continuity Plan (BE-LCP). The BE-LCP simplifies the K–12 Curriculum into the Most Essential Learning Competencies (MELCs), which were given across a variety of learning modalities and platforms and were used by field implementers around the country. This reorganization of the K–12 Curriculum into MELCs was the last-ditch effort to improve learning and reduce the burden of adapting classroom-based learning resources for online learning (DepEd Order No.12, s.2020). Although this plan was promulgated by DepEd, the laboratory schools and private schools had the option to adopt it or not. But in the case of the participants, their schools adopted to these Most Essential Learning Competencies.

Theme 2: Internet Connection Issues, Lack of Interaction and Academic Dishonesty

Along with the downside of technological advancements, distance learning with the use of virtual classrooms has also its undesirable side. In this study, these drawbacks were experienced; internet connection issues, lack of interaction and academic dishonesty. The intermittent internet connection was one of the concerns of the teachers teaching Reading and Writing as a subject in the virtual classrooms especially in synchronous classes since the interruptions were not predicted. Along with this is the lack of interaction in synchronous classes. In the beginning of every school year during pandemic, students were very eager to participate as the platform was new to them. However, when it reached the mid school year, their participation lessened as claimed by the teachers teaching Reading and Writing as a subject in the virtual classroom. In addition to this was the presence of academic dishonesty on the output of some students. With the easy use of search engines and since class was done virtually in the teaching of Reading and Writing as a subject, teachers indicated that some of the students' outputs were being copied and verified through comparison of outputs and with the use of plagiarism feature in the virtual classroom. Below are samples of their statements:

> *It's also hard when there is sudden interruption in internet connection during synchronous class, the discussion would be compromised.*

> *The challenges include how to increase students' participation, sometimes when there is oral recitation, some would leave the meeting*

> *…. maybe because they can just easily check or copy statements from the internet since I am not there to facilitate and monitor. (Jean)*

> *Internet connection affects the stability of the lessons too.*

> *…. participation is not ensured as well as students may opt not to answer.*

> *With the aid of validity applications, written works are ensured original. Tasks are contextualized in a way that it has to be personal to the students, lessening plagiarism. (Alex)*

> *One challenge also in teaching the subject in virtual classroom is the unavailability of internet connection in random days……. you cannot actually predict when the connection will be gone.*

> *With regards to strategies, I see to it that I employ activities which would ignite students' interests especially that this is a reading and writing class.*

> *The challenges would be attributed to the checking of students' outputs because you need to ensure credibility and authenticity. It's also hard if you discover few students where most of the content of their written outputs are plagiarized. (Dina)*

> *Also, intermittent and/or loss of internet connection can be a problem at times because it would really affect the teaching and learning delivery. There are actually times that internet is disrupted and other areas far from the city have slow internet connection.*

> *Participation and involvement during classes are compromised since others choose not to respond.*

Being their teacher in the previous years, I can already decipher if that certain output is hers/him or not. But there are some that you can really say that they just copy the content from the internet, worst is most of the content of the written output is being copied which is alarming. (Rita)

The role of internet was very vital in the teaching of Reading and Writing as a subject because it was done in virtual classroom. Although there were schedules for asynchronous activities where students could do activities offline, synchronous classes that teachers would give lectures and instructions was also very important. In this case, the unavailability of internet services would hinder the effectivity of transfer of learning (Dela Rosa, 2016). Although a number of studies claimed that the use of virtual space improved students' motivation (Dela Rosa, 2016; Yango, Bermudo & Quendangan, 2019; Walinsura, 2021), the findings in this study would appeal that it was the opposite. This factor could be constituted to the fact that students may have other activities at the back of their camera because it was not compulsory for them to turn on their cameras. This could also be attributed to the different factors which would create barriers in participation. These factors include interference from family members while having synchronous class, not so conducive home learning environment in which the activities of family members cause distractions to the students (Rasmitadila et al, 2020), disturbances from other students using online application in a virtual classroom, chatting with friends and classmates in their respective group chats while the class was going on, bored in listening to the discussion because it was a writing class. This could be the reasons why students' participation and involvement be impaired. Also, given the nature of writing, a writing class can drastically change from interesting to boring and dragging which in turn lead to the loss of interest among the learners. That is why, the teachers' pedagogical content knowledge was paramount in sustaining the learners' motivation, integration and involvement in writing class. As evidence to the claim of academic dishonesty, there was a feature in the virtual classroom that would detect if the content of the written output was being copied. These were validated when parts of their written outputs were highlighted as plagiarized when submitted in the virtual classroom. There were also instances that teachers could detect if certain work was being copied from any source by simply reading the output. The teachers could distinguish because he/she already knew the ability of his/ her students. Instead of writing in their own, they would opt to copying from different sites because it was just easy unlike thinking of ideas to be written. This action now could be linked to academic dishonesty which was not a good practice for students. Academic dishonesty can be a high-stake issue for institutions that offer programs through online learning, as obligations to provide assurances of integrity and student identity become more stringent (McGee, 2013). While academic dishonesty is a concern in all educational settings, it is especially so in distance learning courses, where students work autonomously and with less direct supervision from an instructor. According to several research, students and staff members believe that academic dishonesty, particularly cheating, is more frequent in online environments (Hancock, 2013) and it involves variety of reasons.

Theme 3: Access to Digital Environments

The use of virtual classroom in teaching Reading and Writing as a subject brought opportunities to teachers teaching the subject. Although they mentioned that they encountered difficulties but there were also advantages in the use of the platform. Below are vignettes of their responses:

Since we are in the new normal where we use online in teaching, instructional materials and strategies should be interactive and of course with the use of the different applications available online to make the teaching and learning interactive and meaningful. (Jean)

It allowed access to many references and resources including video clips since participants are required to go online during the class. Outputs are digital so the transmission is smooth and the bulk of literal paperwork is absent. (Alex)

Materials and references are readily available especially that class is online, there is easy sharing of videos and other materials during synchronous and asynchronous classes. (Dina)

So, I incorporate online applications like mentimeter, wheel of names, wooclap, annotation feature in zoom and others during discussions so students will be engaged. In terms of references; MELCs, youtube, google engine and LMS. (Rita)

The teachers from the laboratory school made use of Quipper LMS, Google Classroom, Google Meet and Zoom while the teachers from the private school utilized Edu Learn Technologies LMS, Zoom and Google Meet. With these indulgence in these virtual environments, teachers teaching Reading and Writing as a subject were able to explore and experience the different features of the platforms and maximized it to deliver quality teaching and learning despite distance learning. Aside from these official platforms used by the schools, teachers were also resourceful to benefit on the available online applications which were free of charge that they could use to make teaching and learning of reading and writing be interactive and meaningful. These online applications also supported the teachers in planning their lessons since it not only awakens motivation and interest in students but also made them independent in their learning by engaging and participating in collaborative virtual environments to thrive reflecting, interacting and creating (Okmawati, 2020). The different platforms being used by the teachers in teaching the subject provided them with all the necessary tools to discuss new knowledge with students and shared teaching resources in varied multimedia formats as reflected in the study of Warni, Azis and Febriawan (2018). The various platforms were not only advantageous to teachers teaching the subject but also to the students. These interactive applications promoted motivation and engagement among learners in the course of teaching and learning.

Theme 4: Ensuring Skill Development and Lesson Discussion Enrichment

In the teaching of Reading and Writing as subject, the dominant skill being developed is writing because the competencies require them to produce academic written outputs. Ensuring skill development is very essential especially that writing is not an easy task. It requires knowledge, references, techniques and passion in order to produce a well-written text. Since laboratory school only spent one-hour synchronous class and private school spent 45-minutes synchronous class in a week, the teachers teaching Reading and Writing as a subject in the virtual classroom would really find ways on how to enrich lesson discussion in order to satisfy the process in writing academic papers.

The following are teachers' accounts in this concern:

Another is I'm not used to give feedback online, I really prefer to have it traditional because I cannot explain immediately to students their errors in writing. In the virtual space, it's hard to express the feedback especially in some parts because students might misunderstood my comments/suggestions.

I use the study guides provided by the Quipper which is the official Learning Management System used by the school. There are various materials provided by the system like power point, content, quizzes and other support materials. (Jean)

Focusing on the most essential learning competencies, simplifying the lessons helped in covering the topics as efficient as possible which ensures the quality of learning too.

Enriching lessons require quality time. Strategies are limited which have to incorporate technology. (Alex)

Since this is a writing task, they had pre-writing stage. In that stage, they are informed of the things to be improved in their work and comments regarding plagiarism is also added.

Aside from that, I also use online materials like videos, ppts, pdf which are helpful for my lesson discussions and activities. (Dina)

I had difficulties in terms of ensuring that students learn, although their outputs show good performance, you cannot really be sure if they learned from the discussion or they just copied from the internet or their sibling/s might be the one who made it.

In addition, I also access online materials specially lecture and enhancement videos which I incorporate in my discussions. (Rita)

The essential part to make the written output a success one is through feedback. When there is feedback in the stages of writing, students are guided through the writing process. In this case, the teachers teaching Reading and Writing as a subject in the virtual classroom were somehow challenged in giving feedback in the virtual classroom. One of the teachers would say it was inconvenient for her to give feedback in the virtual classroom because it was usually done during asynchronous time. She wasn't certain if she and the students met in the same point regarding the feedback given. However, when the students submitted the revised one, they were able to improve their written outputs.

This feedback from the teacher really helped in ensuring skill development among learners. Maximizing the official platforms really helped in developing the writing skills because it was an avenue where they could write and submit their outputs and eventually the teacher gave feedback based on the submitted one. Since the conduct of synchronous class was not sufficient, the supplemental materials were also being uploaded in the virtual classroom to support teaching and learning process. In the virtual classroom, the students' progress could also be tracked based on their submissions. This manner of ensuring writing skill development is in congruence to the study of Satpute (2021) that supporting teaching and learning process through online study material would really help students' learning. The students' progress must be tracked with timely feedback to follow the progress of the learners.

To make teaching more interesting and effective, these teachers should always monitor the progress of the learners to check which aspect these learners need help. Feedback should also be offered in a systematic way to ensure students' learning in the academic written outputs. Teachers can also contextualize the teaching pedagogy in order to support students to focus on relevant issues which would help students to learn and apply the knowledge in a more productive manner as shown in the study of Walisundara (2020). In the same perspective, Perveen (2016) found out in his study that contributing synchronous and asynchronous paradigms in a virtual classroom created an excellent environment for e-language acquisition.

Theme 5: Students' Performance

As explicated by the teachers, the use of virtual classroom in teaching Reading and Writing as a subject affect students' performance positively. It is evident in the class record of the teachers. Below are their confirmations:

> *If I am to compare their grades between traditional and online, I shall say that their grades increased. (Jean)*
> *There is an increase of the grades. (Alex)*
> *I must say that students' grades really increased. (Dina)*
> *Looking at their grades, I could say that their performance in the subject is good. That is also evident in their written outputs. (Rita)*

The teachers claimed that the students have high grades compared to their grades during traditional face-to-face. This could be associated with the practice of the schools that students should not be bombarded with a lot of activities. They would only give the essential one which should be aligned with the MELCs. It could also be linked to the fact that students were not given quarterly exams (DepEd Order No.31, s.2020). Other than that, the learners navigating online platforms have more exposure to the real-life situations which eventually foster their skills in writing (Kamil, 2021). This is reinforced by Ng & Or's (2020) study, which looked at the use of virtual classrooms during the COVID-19 pandemic and found that using virtual classrooms helped to bridge the gap between theoretical and practical application, resulting in improved skill performance.

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATION

The case reports and cross-case analysis of the four cases revealed teachers' positive and negative experiences in the teaching of Reading and Writing as a subject in the virtual classroom. It showed that the use of virtual classroom in teaching the subject helped teachers' revisit their pedagogical content knowledge which would fit to the approach in new normal. It also allowed them to be challenged in the use of virtual classroom in teaching the subject but were able to find ways on how to turn difficulties into possibilities. Further, the teaching of Reading and Writing as a subject in the virtual classroom affect positively with regards to the students' performance. Student involvement and participation in virtual classroom must be boosted by using varied instructional methods which would encourage more enthusiastic participation in the Reading and Writing as a subject in the virtual classroom (Vlachopoulos, 2020).

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