

Surviving the New Normal: Perspectives of Future Teachers

Hazel DR. Samala

Polytechnic University of the Philippines;
Philippine Normal University
Email: hdrsamala@pup.edu.ph

Abstract

It seemed to be just like a snap of a finger when our lives nearly turned upside down when Covid-19 came into the picture at the beginning of 2020. As it hit the economy, health status, education sector, and the rest of the country, we experienced a change in almost the total norm of our lives. One of the most affected sectors is education, which is visible in how the administration, teachers, parents, and students adjusted to the new normal. This case study investigated the lived experiences of thirty-two future teachers studying at a State University as they prepare themselves and try to cope up with the changes that the Covid-19 pandemic brought in their lives. After meticulous analysis, the researcher found out how the participants prepared and still coping-up with the current situation and summarized their responses using the acronym SOUL. S for 'Searching for answers' – the participants kept looking for answers on how to cope up with the new normal. O for 'being Optimistic' despite the challenges at home, internet connection, allowance, time management to name a few. U for 'Understanding' not only themselves but the people around them as well, and L for 'Looking forward to better days'. The study emphasizes how the future teachers prepare themselves in the new normal, thus, it is recommended for future researchers to conduct studies on the perceptions of teachers or both.

Keywords: Covid-19, new normal, online learning, remote learning

Introduction

The Effect of Covid-19 in the Education Sector Across the Globe

In the first quarter of the year 2020, the world was startled by the fast spread of coronavirus disease, also known as Covid-19, an infectious disease that is caused by a newly discovered coronavirus (WHO, 2020). The said virus originated from the Wuhan province of China which spread rapidly in the whole country and eventually across the globe. Because of the epidemic, the operation of industries both macro and micro, private and government offices, as well as schools stopped. As the world waits for the vaccines and treatments for Covid-19, humanity seeks better ways on how to cope up and to continue with life.

In the report of UNESCO, there are forty-nine educational institutions in Africa, Asia, Europe, the Middle East, North America, and South America that have already announced or implemented the closure of schools and universities. This action will affect nearly 400 million students and the jobs of school personnel (Shin and Iyengar, 2020). While other schools across the globe are still planning and organizing the best ways to continue with the opening of classes, the risk of acquiring the disease must be considered on top of everything.

In the United States, the in-person classes were classes since March 2020 to contain the spread of the covid-19 virus. The US policymakers and school leaders continue their tasks on making plans should the schools reopen in the next academic year. The schools that will decide to reopen should address important health considerations, specifically close coordination with their state and local health authorities (Melnick et al., 2020).

As of April 20 and April 27, 2020, Norway allowed the opening of the daycare centers and pre-schools respectively in regions with low cases of the covid-19 disease. Upon arrival to the schools, the students must undergo a temperature and symptoms check. Physical distancing is practiced with a maximum of fifteen students per class. The school also encourages the use of outdoor space during the classes (Melnck et al., 2020).

The schools in Denmark opened on April 15, 2020, for students up to age 12. Same with Norway, the students need to undergo a temperature and symptoms check upon arrival. The class size is reduced to accommodate a 2-meter or 6-feet distance from one another inside the classroom. The schools also allow the use of outdoor spaces such as gyms, and secondary school classrooms (Melnck et al., 2020).

In Asia, two countries reported continuing the school operation amidst the pandemic. The first is Singapore, where the schools remained open until April 8, 2020, then were closed because of the non-school-related outbreak. The students' temperature was checked twice a day and strictly monitored for symptoms checks. Since the classrooms in Singapore are wide enough to maintain 2 meter or 6-feet distance, there is no maximum class size. Meanwhile, in Taiwan, the schools were never fully closed. There was some local school that temporarily closed due to the need of addressing the spread of the covid-19 disease. As the students enter the school premises, their temperatures are checked and school personnel carefully monitor the students for symptoms checks. There is no maximum class size and the group desks were broken up for the provision of dividers. The students stay inside the classrooms and the subject-matter teachers move between classes (Melnck et al., 2020).

In April 2020, UNICEF released its *Framework for reopening schools* which calls the attention of governments and donors to prioritize education for all, including the most marginalized. The global Education Coalition was established to support governments to strengthen distance learning as they facilitate the reopening of schools for the school year 2020-2021. The UNICEF explains why schools must reopen, when, where, and which schools to reopen and how to reopen schools. Before the opening, schools must prepare with critical policies, procedures and financing plans focusing on safe operations to improve schooling and strengthen remote learning practices. As part of the reopening process, the schools must adopt proactive approaches to reintegrate marginalized and out-of-school children by investing in water, sanitation, and proper hygiene. When the schools reopen, the administrators should strictly monitor health indicators with a focus on wellbeing and protection. The schools should strengthen pedagogy and adapt remote education for blended teaching and learning which includes knowledge on infection transmission and prevention (UNICEF, 2020).

In the Philippines, the suspension of classes started on March 14, 2020, including the on-the-job training (OJT's), internship, and/or practicum in the National Capital Region (NCR). All Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) are advised to coordinate with all their partner Host Training Establishments (HTEs) to decide on alternative modes for all OJTs and internships which will be affected by the sudden announcement of the class suspension. This is following the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) Advisory No. 2: Guidelines for the Prevention, Control, and Mitigation of the Spread of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) in HEIs released in March 11, 2020. Meanwhile, all HEIs established protocols that are based on the World Health Organization (WHO) guidelines for the screening and response to Covid-19. As of the writing, classes are still suspended in the country and CHED adopted the Flexible Learning (FL) modality as the classes resume.

Flexible Learning: The New Normal Education

In March 2020, a nationwide lockdown was declared by President Rodrigo Duterte in relevance to the fast-spreading rate of the Covid-19 virus. The second semester of the academic year

(AY) 2019-2020 has not yet ended when the lockdown started. This made a 360-degree turn to almost everyone especially for the students and teachers to conclude the remaining days of the said school year.

When the opening of classes for the AY 2020-2021 came, the Department of Education and Commission of Higher Education decided to delay the opening of classes until October 2020 for the schools and Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) to be prepared at least. Schools and HEIs did what they think is best especially in the preparation of instructional materials such as modules, task sheets, etc. which are to be delivered to their students once the classes start. Which the sudden change in our lives due to the pandemic, how sure are we that we are ready to embrace the new normal in education? Are we prepared enough for the model of learning that we will use to move on with the new normal?

While there is no universal definition for flexible learning that has been adopted by scholars (Li & Wong, 2018), flexibility must be seen in at least one of the different learning dimensions such as pace, time, place, content, assessment, learning style, or path (Chen, 2003). Thus, FL is often used as similarly as open learning, distance learning, or blended learning (Tucker & Morris, 2012). Despite the increasing number of online tools, the act of simply uploading learning materials to an institution's learning management system (LMS) might not be enough to support the idea of FL (Brown, 2016; Claude et al., 2018). Recent studies, meta-analysis to be specific on blended learning revealed its positive effect compared with the students enrolled in the traditional mode but do not indicate whether the traditional mode is supported by technology; and that students enrolled in blended learning behave differently from the students enrolled in the traditional mode of learning due to family obligations, self-regulated learning skills, and motivation level (Vo et al., 2017; Deschacht & Goeman, 2015; Bernard et al., 2014; Means et al., 2013).

CHED Memorandum Order No. 4, series of 2020 "Guidelines on the Implementation of Flexible Learning" took effect on September 2, 2020. It states the adaptation of the Flexible Learning (FL) of the public and private HEIs in the country beginning the academic year (AY) 2020-2021. Flexible learning is defined as a pedagogical approach covering the flexibility of time, place and the technology to be used (Cassidy et al., 2016). FL may vary depending on different factors such as approaches, availability of devices, internet connectivity, and the level of digital literacy (Macalde, 2020). In general, the design and the delivery as well as the courses and the learning interventions in FL seek to address the students' needs specifically their place, pace, and outcomes as well as the use of the digital and non-digital technology whether it is face-to-face or in-person, out-of-classroom modality or a combination the two. FL then ensures that there is continuity of both inclusive and accessible education in case the traditional mode of learning is not possible due to national emergencies (Fermin, 2020; De Vera, 2020).

In the last quarter of 2020, CHED proposed an up to Php50.928-Billion budget, a Php3-B increase from the agency's present budget to prepare for the next school year's expenses. This is after it decides to establish guidelines on how schools conduct online classes emphasizing the possibility of lack of focus among students giving the situation that there are many distractions around them at home (Pelayo, 2020). In a live interview, CHED Chairman Prospero De Vera said that "*there is no going back to the traditional. Full-packed, face-to-face classrooms. CHED has adopted a policy where flexible learning will continue in the school year 2021 and thereafter*". He added that going back to classroom teaching would waste all the investments in technology, training of teachers, and the retrofitting of the facilities, just to adapt to the new normal (Cruz, 2021).

With the abovementioned literature, the researcher has taught how the students survived the first school year in the new normal. Since there were few studies on how education students – the

future teachers perceived flexible learning because the pandemic happened at an instant, the researcher navigated on the experiences and point of view of the future teachers being honed in a state university with the largest population. Thus, this study aimed to (1) know how ready the participants emotionally, financially, and mentally; (2) what factors are necessary to be able to survive the mode of learning in the new normal; (3) what are the challenges experienced by the participants; and (4) as future teachers, how will the learning process be successful in the new normal.

Methodology

This case study explored the lived experiences of thirty-two randomly selected future teachers or education college students in a state university during the first semester of the first year of implementation of flexible learning across the country. A case study is a qualitative research methodology defined as an intensive study about a situation, a person, a group of people, or a unit that involves the systematic investigation of in-depth data (Grustafsson, 2017; Woods and Calanzaro, 1980 in Heale and Twycross, 2018). Further, case studies examine the complex phenomenon in a natural setting to understand it profoundly (Yin, 2003; Hamel, 1993 in Heale and Twycross, 2018).

Results and Discussion

Searching for Answers

The educational system across the globe was once in chaos as the Covid-19 Pandemic surfaced, more so as when all prepared for the opening of the AY 2020-2021. Preparing for the new normal was not an easy task. It needed different strategies, resources, manpower to execute the whole adjustment to pursue the opening of classes. Disaster-preparedness plans which were once done by selected government agencies were designed by schools to minimize the risks of any interruptions that the pandemic may bring. When the face-to-face classes were canceled, followed by the announcement of the adaptation of online learning and flexible learning, different opinions flooded social media. Will the time remaining until the opening of classes would be enough for everyone in the academe to be ready for what we will face in the coming days? Sadly, in the Philippines, many teachers and students especially in the public institutions are not that well-versed when it comes to online learning. This is even though online learning has been around the corner for more decades (Hodges et al., 2020).

The participants struggled in the adjustment to the new mode of learning. Most of them felt lonely in the first months of the AY 2020-2021. They kept on asking themselves if they will be able to catch up with all the lessons in the new set-up. One student mentioned that *“It is very hard for me to manage my time because there are many household chores that I should do every day. I can attend my online classes, but during asynchronous class, I will be told to do chores at home.”* Davis (2021) stated on his blog some tips on how to embrace the new normal in education in the Philippine setting: (1) adjust to the new normal in your way; (2) there is a need to establish a balanced routine to succeed in studies; (3) one should focus on success; (4) and talk to other people. Although it sounds easy to say all of these, we cannot deny the difficulties that the participants faced in the first year of the flexible learning scheme. Establishing a balanced routine at home seemed to be difficult for the students because they easily get confused about the time that they will allow for studies and other duties at home. One participant said *“I got confused up to the point that I had no sense of time at all. I know my class schedule for the whole semester, but I find it hard to manage the duties at home and the outputs that I need to submit on or before the deadlines. I kept asking myself – kaya ko ba ‘to? (Can I do it?)”* One of the participants in the class president shared how tired she is during the first semester, *“I felt that I need to be there always... and be responsive online*

despite being enrolled as a student in the correspondence mode. I felt like I need to know everything because my classmates depend on me especially in communicating with our professors. This made me tired and asked myself if I can survive a semester with this responsibility.” Time management could be one of the factors to succeed in the new normal but students kept on asking themselves how long they will get used to what is at the moment.

Another factor that affected the adjustment of the students is their family’s capability to provide them with stable internet connections and gadgets that they need. *“I only use my cellphone because I don’t have a laptop. My parents can’t buy me one because my father lost his job because of the pandemic. It’s hard to use a cellphone especially when I need to edit documents and submit them online. I asked myself if I can pass all my subjects with this set-up. Luckily, my cousin offered her laptop once in a while so I can catch up with the lessons and meet all the deadlines.”* Before the opening of classes, it was already predicted that internet access and gadgets to be used in the new normal especially those with no internet access and no gadgets before the pandemic as well as the marginalized group (Tria, 2020). And because the country has the slowest internet connectivity in the whole of Asia (Akamai, 2017), the quality of learning and equity gaps will arise (Winthrop, 2020). The new mode of learning seemed to be more expensive than the face-to-face. *“There are times that I cannot attend our online classes because I can’t buy internet load. A two-hour zoom meeting for our online discussion already consumes the internet load that I use for a week during the face-to-face, so it’s really difficult for me”,* a respondent reiterated. *“Unlike in the face-to-face that we are doing activities and requirements collaboratively including the sharing of expenses, we seldom do it today. I have no choice but to shoulder some expenses on my own for some activities and projects and it’s a bit hard for me and my family. One time, I asked my parents if we can still finance my studies and all the requirements I need to submit. They told me that I should hang in there because they are doing their best”,* another respondent shared.

When asked if the participants are mentally prepared, most of them answered that they are not a hundred percent if they are ready for the new normal in education. *“I am in a constant battle with my mind. I kept asking too many ‘what ifs’ to myself. I always feel I am stressed to find answers to my questions”,* one of the participants said. *“It is mentally exhausting to think of how I will submit requirements given to us. I mean... yes we have modules given on the first week of classes but other requirements followed”,* another respondent stated. *“I thought I was ready for the new normal. I convinced my mind that the pandemic will stay for a while, just like what I heard and saw on social media. But after a month, I already felt the stress and I find it hard to grasp all the lessons because of the limitation of the online meetings”,* a respondent shared. With the new normal in our front view and all the adjustments in our rear, the participants had to search for answers on how they will survive if not the whole academic year, even the first semester of the AY 2020-2021. In the study of Suryaman et al. (2020), it is stated that the students faced many obstacles at home in their learning environments such as high internet cost, lack of mastery of the technology, and limited interaction with others. In a parallel study of Kapasia et al. (2020), confinement of students at home during the pandemic brought challenges in their online classes that resulted in anxiety and depression.

Being Optimistic

Contrary to the studies of Suryaman et al (2020) and Kapasia et al. (2020), Gonzales et al. (2020) stated that learning at home contributed to positive effects on the students’ performance because of attributing new learning strategies which in turn improved the learning efficiency of the students. the participants of this study reiterated how stressed they are during the adjustment in the new normal education, but also shared that they are hopeful that everything will be fine.

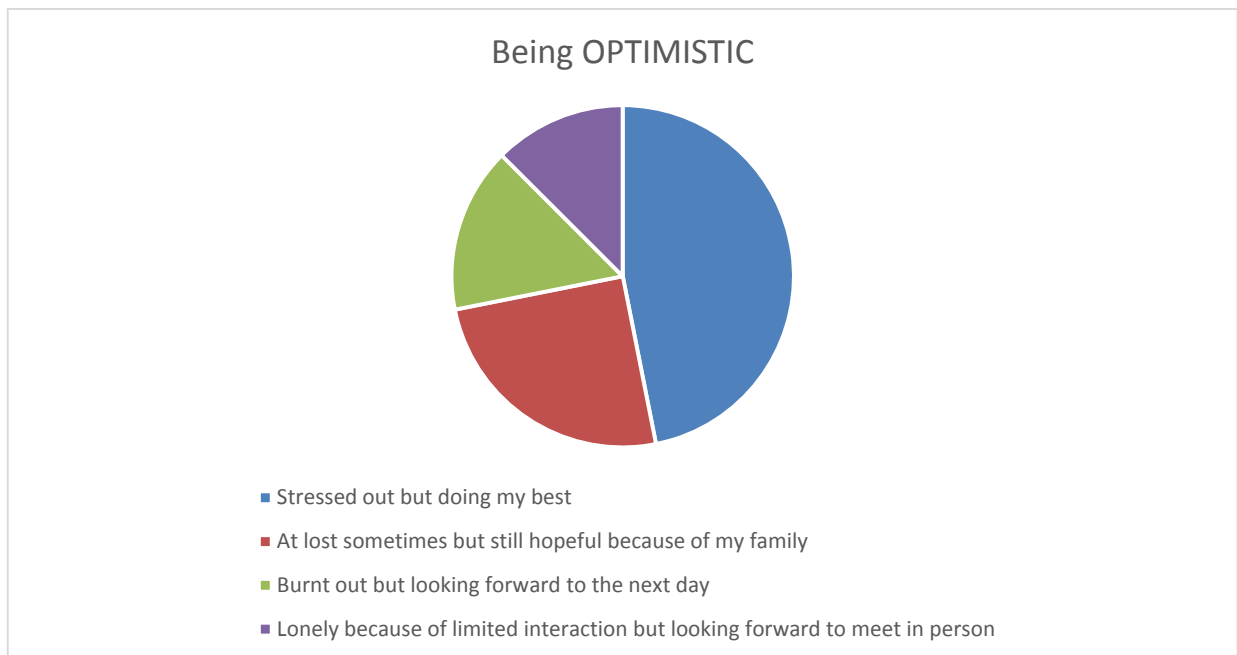


Figure 1. Students' Perceptions on the New Normal Education

Figure 1 shows the themes that emerged from the participants' experiences, that despite being lost, feeling stressed and depressed, and financially challenged, the students are still hopeful. The student who said, *"I got confused up to the point that I had no sense of time at all... in the end shared that ...I felt stressed most of the time, but I know that I am doing my best. This keeps me going"*. Students learning at home may not be the ideal setup for most of us, but cultivating a climate where one is taken care of poses a huge impact on the students struggling in the new normal. This seemed to be what some of the participants felt. *"Being at home is a challenge but knowing that I am safe with my family at home makes me hopeful"*, one respondent said. Another respondent mentioned, *"The fact that my parents are working hard despite the pandemic, I believe that I can make it through this although I felt lost most of the time"*. Pope (2020) reiterated that students who feel a sense of belonging and connection to adults and their peers are more engaged in learning. Having your family beside you while facing the challenges of the pandemic indeed contributes to this. Being hopeful shows positivity in every aspect of one's point of view. One respondent shared this statement *"napapagod, pero hindi po susuko. (I'm getting tired but I won't give up)"*. The rest of the participants shared the sentiment *"I am hoping that the next day will be better"*. Meanwhile, the participants long for the time when they can meet their colleagues at school. *"Not seeing my school buddies whom I work with collaboratively makes me sad, that's why I am praying that this pandemic will end soon"*, one respondent stated. *"I miss my schoolmates. Having them by my side makes the heavy load light. I can ask them whenever I am having difficulty with my studies. We help each other all the time which we can't always do right now because of the pandemic"*, another respondent said. In the Social Presence Theory by Short et al. (1976) elaborated by Goodyear (2002), students' perceptions of 'Human-Human interaction'. The idea is to translate directly if online education. *"I like the synchronous classes because I get to see my friends even thru online class"*, one respondent said. Tu (2002) reported that students with positive responses in the online synchronous classes give 'real-time discussion responsive and pleasant' to familiar topics. Further, interactions

like in synchronous classes lessen the psychological distance of the participants and improve the learning process and instructional satisfaction. Thus, social presence poses the importance of social connections in the learning process. (Gunawerdena and Zittle, 1997 in Nguyen et al., 2021).

Understanding the Situation

With the extraordinary challenges that the pandemic has brought us, one seemed to be ready to accept that fighting against it will be a long battle. If not contained, we need to live in the new normal – that is to live with the evolving disease and virus (Denworth, 2020). *“The pandemic might still stick around, which means that there will be more stressful days and nights of juggling everything at hand. It is hard, of course, that’s why understanding the situation is important”*, one respondent said. *“It is important that our professors understand what we are going through. Whenever they become more lenient to deadlines and submission dates, it motivates us”*, another respondent said. *“There are times that I had to call my classmates and ask for a group call just to share our experiences and what we’re going through. It’s good to know that there are people who understand your situation and who can relate to your experiences*, another respondent shared.

To be able to survive the new normal in education, one must be tough to face the situation. This study suggests several factors necessary for the success of flexible learning such as (1) availability of learning equipment like laptop or desktop computer; (2) enough time given to the students to finish all the given tasks; (3) communication with the professors; and (4) clarity of the instructions in the instructional materials. *“Having your gadgets like laptop or desktop computer is important today. It really hard to use a cellphone during classes and when we need to submit an output, sometimes I can’t do it using my cellphone”*, said one respondent. The participants also agreed on giving them enough time to finish all the tasks. Although the instructional materials like modules were given online on the first day of classes, sometimes, it is still hard to comply with other outputs given during synchronous classes. *“It’s great that our modules were given beforehand, but sometimes, there are assignments and other tasks given during synchronous classes. Sometimes, several teachers give assignments and the deadline falls on the same date, that’s when it becomes hard for me”*, one respondent shared. *“We’re lucky that our professors are approachable even during the pandemic. Communication with them is really important nowadays because when we get confused with the tasks that we need to do, we can approach them for clarifications”*, another respondent shared. *“There are minimal typographical errors in the modules, but the instructions for the activities are clear. Sometimes, they are harder than the examples given to us during the online class, that’s when we ask our professors for clarifications”*, another respondent said.

Looking forward to Better Days

Recent studies revealed that the common challenges faced by the students in the new normal are the use of technology and learning competencies (Rasheed et al., 2020). In addition to this, the effect of lockdown and making one’s home his/her learning environment shows restrictions in the students’ learning experiences (Day et al., 2021; Kapasia et al., 2020). Students tend to get easily distracted due to the noise at home, limited learning spaces, and facilities at home (Barrot et al., 2021). The abovementioned supports the results of this study on the challenges faced by the participants. *“There are times that I can’t concentrate in my online classes because of the noise in the house and my neighborhood”*, one respondent commented. *“We used different platforms in different subjects, so I had to download the apps in my cellphone so I can easily get into our online meeting room”*, another respondent reiterated. *“The instructional materials came after the midterms, so even I am enrolled in the correspondence model, I need to stay online and attend online classes so I can get access to the instructional materials that we’ll use for the whole semester. Although the deadline*

of submissions is extended, it was hard because I felt I am left behind in the lessons”, a respondent explained.

Despite the challenges that the students faced in the new normal education, having a positive mind creates a better outcome (Robosa et al., 2021). The challenges brought by the Covid-19 Pandemic hit us as a country and affected badly the educational system. Despite the mitigation and plans of HEIs, there were still unexpected challenges that emerged in the new normal education. There may be one or two things that helped us cope up with our current situation and being hopeful is indeed one of the keys to moving forward. “What we are experiencing is hard, especially when you get sick because of the virus. You need to truly trust that better days are coming so that you’ll be able to move on”, a respondent shared. “Waking up healthy with my complete family helps me feel good despite all the stress and challenges”, a respondent said.

As future teachers, the participants were asked how they think the new normal education will become successful. Figure 2 shows the themes generated from their responses.

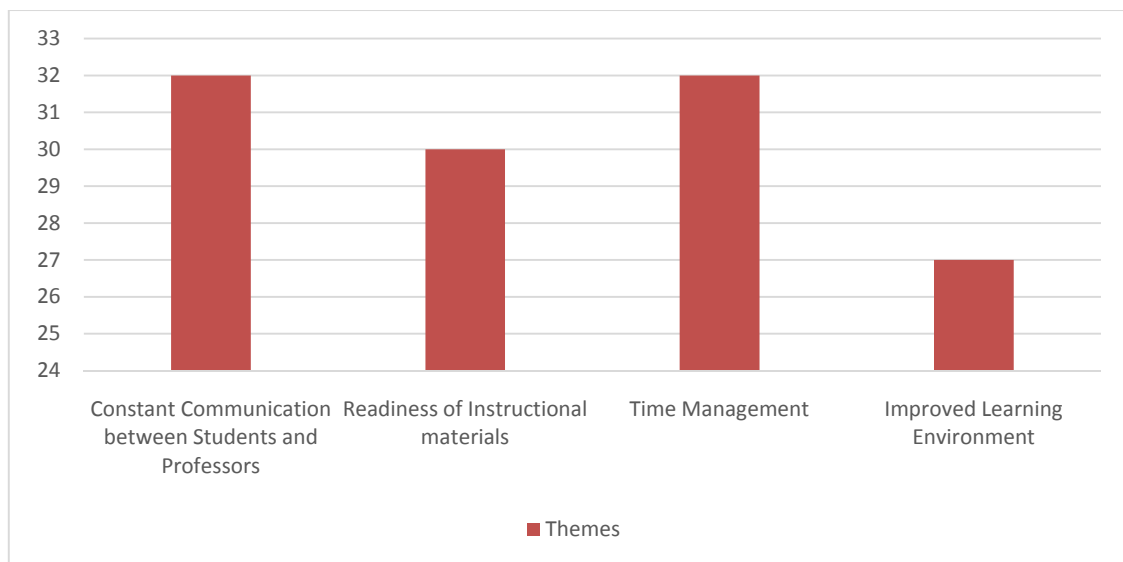


Figure 2. Students Perceptions for the Success of Education in the New Normal

“Building a personal connection between the professor and the students gives more hope and motivation to us”; “We feel they (professors) understand us when we get to ask them directly through email or chat messages”; “An understanding teacher is very helpful to his/her students. By just replying to our messages despite their workload uplifts our spirits”; “When our professors send messages like ‘hi’ and ‘hello’ or ‘kumusta kayo?’ (How is everyone?), it felt good. I think it’s important in the new normal, having the feeling that you are not alone”, are some of the notable responses of the participants in this study. This is supported by Tria (2021) as he stated that collaboration and communication are the most important at these difficult times that help us step up in the new normal. On the other hand, the teachers also get motivated by their students when they see them striving and giving their best in studying despite the many imitations in the new normal (Robosa, 2021).

Meanwhile, the readiness of the instructional materials is equally important. The sudden changes in the mode of learning across the globe caught everyone in an unexpected learning environment. Barrot et al. (2021) implied that one of the critical areas in the new normal education is instructional delivery. “Aside from the instructional materials, online resources and links to differ-

ent educational videos, it will be helpful if our professors will provide offline videos regarding topics which are not discussed in the online classes”; “The delay in the delivery of the modules made it difficult for me to catch up with the lessons” are some of the participants’ perceptions on how the new normal education will succeed.

Time management posed a positive effect on the academic achievement of the students and the learning process (Alyami et al., 2021). “With good time management, I know that I will be okay and will be able to catch up with all that I missed before”; “To be able to submit all the requirements, enough time must be given to the students to accomplish all the tasks”; “It’s really hard to stay in front of my laptop for straight 6 hours or more for both online classes and for accomplishing the requirements”, reiterated by the participants. Time management in e-learning is at risk if consume inadequately or if used improperly because e-learning is supposed to make the process easier (Floynek and Motycka, 2009). Thus, balanced time management is an important factor for the students to succeed in the new normal.

An adequate learning environment in every institution is important. It is where the students can think and function well in his/her studies. It is a context that supports the necessary learning process to achieve the desired learning outcomes. It is important to set up a particular learning environment at home to motivate and stimulate the learners, which is a limitation in the new normal especially in a poor environment (Arnou et al., 2020). “I miss our classroom and the school in general. I had a hard time adjusting that I will have my classes at home. It may sound childish but it hit me and gave me a hard time to adjust”; “At home, there are distractions like household chores, seeing my bed in front of me, and the noise in our neighborhood, so I need to lock myself in my room to attend my online classes”; “Sometimes, I find it hard to set my mind to study at home. I don’t have my own space. I sometimes study at the dining table, in our room, or the living room, so I decide to stay late at night when there is no one in the living room”; “As a future educator, it is important to consider what the students are going through, where they are coming from, or if do they have enough learning tools. I think it will be easier for the students to learn despite the limitations of the current situation, shared by the participants. To address the poor learning environment as one of the challenges of online learning, students talked to their family members, some moved to a quieter place to study, and some decided to study at night when the environment is quiet (Barrot, 2021).

Conclusions and Recommendations

This study shows how the lived experiences of future teachers in the new normal education and how they are coping-up with the current situation. The researcher summarized their responses using the acronym SOUL. S for ‘Searching for answers’ – the participants of the study kept looking for answers on how to cope up with the new normal. O for ‘being Optimistic’ despite the challenges at home, internet connection, allowance, time management to name a few. U for ‘Understanding’ not only themselves but the people around them as well. And L for ‘Looking forward to better days. This study is limited to the perceptions of students who are future teachers. It is recommended for future researchers to conduct studies on the perceptions of teachers or both. The pandemic turned our world upside down. Emergencies like this caught us off guard which revealed how unprepared are we for possible threats in the education system. Thus, we can consider this a wake-up call for everyone in the academe to carefully and intelligently plan for the future of education.

References

- Akamai (2017). Akamai state of internet. Akamai, 10(1). Retrieved from: <https://www.akamai.com/us/en/multimedia/documents/state-of-the-internet/q1-2017-state-of-the-internet-connectivity-report.pdf>.
- Alyami, A. et al. (2021). Impact of time-management on the students' academic performance: A cross-sectional study. *Creative Education*, 2021, 12, 471-485. Retrieved from: https://www.scirp.org/pdf/ce_2021030411182807.pdf.
- Arnou, C. et al. (2020). Covid-19 and educational spaces: creating a powerful and social inclusive learning environment at home. Retrieved from: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/341205829_COVID-19_and_educational_spaces_Creating_a_powerful_and_social_inclusive_learning_environment_at_home.
- Barrot, J. S. et al. (2021). Students' online learning challenges during the pandemic and how they cope with them: The case of the Philippines. *Education and Information Technologies* 2021,26, 7321-7338.
- Bernard, R. et al. (2014). A meta-analysis of blended learning and technology use in higher education: from general to applied. *Journal of Computing in Higher Education*. 26(1). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12528-013-9077-3>
- Brown, M. (2016). Blended instructional practice: A review of the empirical literature on instructors' adoption and use of online tools in face-to-face teaching. *The Internet and Higher Education*, 31, 1-10 <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.iheduc.2016.05.001>
- CHED Memorandum from the Office of the Chairperson: CHED Covid-19 Advisory No.2. 2020. Retrieved from: <https://ched.gov.ph/wp-content/uploads/CHED-COVID-2019-Advisory-No.-2.pdf>
- CHED Memorandum Order No. 4 Series of 2020: Guidelines on the Implementation of Flexible Learning. Retrieved from: <https://ched.gov.ph/wp-content/uploads/CMO-No.-4-s.-2020-Guidelines-on-the-Implementation-of-Flexible-Learning.pdf>
- Chen, D. (2003). Uncovering the provisos behind flexible learning. *Educational Technology and Society*, 6(2), 25-30.
- Claude, M. et al. (2018). Learning effectiveness and students' perceptions in a flexible learning course. *European Journal of Open, Distance and E-Learning*, 21(2), 44-52. <https://doi.org/10.2478/eurodl-2018-0006>
- Cruz, K. (2021). Flexible learning will be the norm – CHED. Retrieved from: <https://www.manilatimes.net/2021/05/24/news/national/flexible-learning-will-be-the-norm-ched/1800408>
- Day, T. et al. (2021). The immediate impact of Covid-19 on postsecondary teaching and learning. *The Professional Geographer*, 73(1), 1-13.
- Deschacht, N. et al. (2015). The effect of blended learning on course persistence and performance of adult learners. *Comput, Educ.*, 87(C), 83-89
- Goodyear, P. (2002). Psychological foundations for networked learning in Networked Learning: Perspectives and Issues. *Computer Supported Cooperative Work*. London, Springer, 49-75 https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4471-0181-9_4
- Graaf, R., Hoogerwerf, M., and Vries, M. (2020). The ethics of deferred consent in times of pandemic. *Nature Medicine Journal*. 26, 1328-1330. Retrieved from: <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41591-020-0999-9>

- Grustafsson, J. (2017). Single case studies vs. multiple case studies: A comparative study. *Halmstad, Sweden: Halmstad University*.
- Gunawardena, C. N. and Zittle, F.J. (1997). Social presence as a predictor of satisfaction within a computer mediated conferencing environment. *Am. J. Distance Educ.* 11, 8-26. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08923649709526970>
- Hamel, J. (2018). Case study methods. Newbury Park: Sage. 1993 in Heale and Twycross.
- Heale, R. and Twycross, A. (2018). What is a case study? <https://doi.org/10.1136/eb-2017-102845>
- Kapasias, N. et al. (2020). Impact of lockdown on learning status of undergraduate and postgraduate students during covid-19 pandemic in West Bengal, India. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 116, 105194.
- Li, K. C. et al. (2018). Revisiting the definitions and implementation of flexible learning. In k. edition. *Innovations in Open and Flexible Education*. 1-13 Singapore: Springer Singapore
- Means, B. et al. (2013). The effectiveness of online and blended learning: A meta-analysis of the empirical literature. *Teachers College Record*. 115 (3). 1-47. Retrieved from: <http://www.tcrecord.org/Content.asp?ContentId=16882>
- Melnick, H. et al. (2020). Reopening schools in the context of Covid-19: Health and safety guidelines from other countries. Retrieved from: <https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/product/reopening-schools-covid-19-brief>
- Nguyen, T. et al. (2021). Insights into students' experiences and perceptions of remote learning methods: from the covid-19 pandemic to best practice for the future. <https://doi.org/10.3389/feduc.2021.647986>
- Pelayo, M. (2020). CHED examines effects of online classes on students' study habits. Retrieved from: <https://www.untvweb.com/news/ched-examines-effects-of-online-classes-on-students-study-habits/>
- Pope, D. (n. d.) Student reflections during the pandemic: An opportunity for teachers to create a "new" normal. Retrieved from: <https://challengesuccess.org/resources/create-a-new-normal/>
- Rasheed, R. A. et al. (2020). Challenges in the online component of blended learning: a systematic review. *Computers and Education*., 144, 103701.
- Robosa, J. et al. (2021). The experiences and challenges faced of the public school teachers amidst the covid-19 pandemic: A phenomenological study in the Philippines. *International Journal of Advance Research and Innovative Ideas in Education*, 7(1).
- Sandelowski, M. (2018). One is the liveliest number: The case orientation of qualitative research in Heale and Waycross.
- Short, J. et al. (1976). The social psychology of telecommunications. London: John Wiley & Sons.
- Suryaman, M. et al. (2020). Covid-19 pandemic and home online learning system: Does it affect the quality of pharmacy school learning? *Systematic Reviews in Pharmacy*, 11, 524-530.
- Tria, J. (2020). The covid-19 pandemic through the lens of education in the Philippines: The new normal. *International Journal of Pedagogical Development and Lifelong Learning*. 1(1), ep2001. <https://doi.org/10.30935/ijpdll/8311>
- Tu, C.-H. (2002). The measurement of social presence in an online learning environment. *Int. J.E Learn.* 1, 34-45. <https://doi.org/10.17471/2499-4324/421>
- Tucker, R. (2012). By Design: Negotiating flexible learning in the built environment discipline. *Research in Learning Technology*, 20(1), n1. <https://doi.org/10.3402/rlt.v20i0.14404>
- Winthrop, R. (2020). Top 10 risks and opportunities for education in the face of covid-19. Brookings. Retrieved from: <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/education-plus-development/2020/04/10/top-10-risks-and-opportunities-for-education-in-the-face-of-covid-19/>

- Woods, NF., and Calanzaro, M. (2018). Nursing research: Theory and practice in Heale and Twy-cross.
- Yin, RK. (2003). Case study research: Design and methods. *Thousand Oaks*: Sage.