

# Using Flexible Learning Design in Teaching English: Narratives of First-Year College Students of Southern Philippines Amidst Pandemic

Arbaya H. Boquia<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> College of Arts & Sciences, Cotabato State University, Philippines

Correspondence: Arbaya H. Boquia, College of Arts & Sciences, Cotabato State University, Cotabato City, Philippines. E-mail: Arbaya\_boquia@cotsu.edu.ph

Received: April 14, 2023

Accepted: July 19, 2023

Online Published: September 12, 2023

doi:10.5430/wjel.v13n8p281

URL: <https://doi.org/10.5430/wjel.v13n8p281>

## Abstract

This study explored the experiences of first-year college students in learning the English language using the flexible learning modality during the COVID-19 Pandemic. It described students' experiences using the phenomenological approach, specifically during the lockdown period. The data were gathered using semi-structured interview guide questions to ten first-year college students who were purposely chosen. The interview was done individually and face-to-face, following the standard health protocols. Results showed that participants' experiences were categorized as favorable and negative. Participants enjoyed using the internet to learn and explore during their free time. Technology and instructor guidance helped them learn independently. However, they found it unfavorable when they could not interact with their peers because classes were situated online, and some did not have smart devices. Students also noted that poor internet connectivity restricted their online learning. Also, students faced difficulties. However, offline tasks like doing assignments, watching downloaded pre-recorded video lectures, and asking peers for help addressed these issues. While the study found that flexible learning cannot replace face-to-face instruction, it was noted that student ICT abilities were beneficial.

**Keywords:** flexible learning modality, online teaching, English language learning, favorable experiences, challenges

## 1. Introduction

Due to school closures caused by the COVID-19 Pandemic, teachers worldwide have been forced to shift their face-to-face classes online. This fast change to what is now called "quaranteaching" and remote learning has given teachers little time to prepare for virtual teaching and learning (Pace et al., 2020). Likewise, students are unable to prepare for this emergent situation. They used to learn from physical classroom meetings rather than remote teaching and learning modality.

Consequently, many teachers are not prepared for remote setup. Additionally, nobody thought the Pandemic would last for more than two years. Government organizations like the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) and the Department of Education (DepEd) have pushed for online courses or flexible learning to address pandemic issues. People were mandated to follow the standard health protocols, which required them to maintain physical distancing to limit the transmission of the virus.

Since Flexible Learning (FL) has no restrictions on time or pace of study, it seems to be the most practical approach. Flexible learning (FL) is the most convenient instructional delivery in times like the global Pandemic. Although many Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) have embraced flexible learning, it is no longer a novel method of delivering instruction in higher education. However, many HEIs still lack the pedagogical knowledge, empowerment, and readiness to develop their content rather than merely teaching predetermined content. (Cortes, 2020).

Additionally, literature revealed that the shift to an online classroom environment had affected students' achievement of learning goals (Adeniyi & Kuku, 2023). The findings of Huber and Helm (2020) and Leeb et al. (2020), which assert that the abrupt switch from in-person instruction to online instruction has diminished students' learning capacities containing their interaction with one another, attest to this as well. Furthermore, Di Pietro et al. (2020) espoused that students' atmosphere and classroom experience affect their socio-cognitive development. The United States, as an example, through the National Education Association, explained that physical classroom experience and atmosphere are mandatory for students to develop interaction between and among their teachers and students. In the case of impending health crises, the absence of physical interaction will cause negatively on their learning targets.

From the rising interest to discovering experiences of students as well as teachers in the shift to flexible and online learning, studies on factors ranging from learning resources, digital demands, facilities, and students' experiences alongside these are still scarce. In the Philippines, more research on flexible learning modes focuses on teachers' adjustments and experiences, as well as students' perceptions of the system of education during the COVID-19 (Tarrayo et al., 2021; Alea et al., 2020; Pinar et al. 2021).

With the rising popularity of technology and the internet, instructors and students can easily hold online classes. However, this does not apply to all students since some do not have internet access, and not all have smart devices. This situation requires the teacher and

students to strengthen their patience in handling these challenges. Moreover, teaching English online seems challenging at the tertiary level because it needs communicative situations. Where the students and educators should be engaged in communicative interaction, this study explored the students' experiences using Flexible Learning in Teaching English Language.

Cotabato State University is not exempted from the abrupt adaptation of Flexible learning. This study sought to explore and describe students' experiences to understand better their situation and how they coped during the Pandemic.

## 2. Method

### 2.1 Research Design

A qualitative method, specifically the phenomenology approach, was used in exploring the students' experiences in learning English in the Flexible Learning modality. The researcher used thematic content analysis to investigate the responses of the participants. The phenomenological research describes the shared significance of numerous people's actual encounters with an idea or phenomenon. This means that as participants encounter a phenomenon, phenomenologists tell what they all have in common (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 121).

### 2.2 Research Participants

This study was done at the Cotabato State University campus. It included ten students who took the Bachelor of Public Administration course and Bachelor of Science in Community Development programs. Students in these programs were usually looked down upon because they did not require a board examination after graduation. Additionally, purposive sampling was used following the criteria that participants in this study should be freshmen who have English subject in the selected school year. Before the study was conducted, the students were informed about the study's objective and that the data gathered would only be used for education and research purposes.

### 2.3 Data Collection

Upon the approval of the University officials, the participants were invited to participate voluntarily in an interview through one-on-one and face-to-face interviews following the standard health protocols. Initially, the participants were informed that the interview was recorded for further procedure.

### 2.4 Data Analysis

Focusing on their experiences with the Flexible Learning modality and their coping mechanisms during the Pandemic, a semi-structured interview guide of two open-ended questions was tested for validity. Data saturation was considered when participants could no longer elicit new or different information after being asked for the same information. During the interview, the participants were allowed to use Tagalog (Filipino) language to provide honest and sincere responses. After this, the data were transcribed, coded, and analyzed for emergent themes. The participants were coded as P1 to P10, where P stands for a participant, and the numbers 1 to 10 represent the number of participants (Table 1). To ensure ethical consideration, the researchers asked permission first from the college president to conduct the study. The researcher utilized thematic content analysis to analyze the study results.

## 3. Results and Discussion

### 3.1 Experiences of Students in Using Flexible Learning Design

Most of the participants, if not all, had varied experiences based on the themes that emerged from their responses during the interview.

Table 1. Sample initial coding

Transcript	Initial Code
<p><i>"Natuto kaming magsumikap mag aral na kami lang, yong wala kaming guro sa pamamagitan ng pag search the google."</i> (P2) (We learned to study by ourselves without the presence of our teachers through surfing on Google.)</p>	Can learn independently
<p><i>"May maganda rin naman na naidudulot ang flexible learning kasi nabigyan ng pagkakataon makapag-aral yong may mga trabaho."</i> (P10) (Flexible learning has also brought benefits since those who are working can acquire education.)</p>	Can work and study
<p><i>"Ang hirap mag-aral ng on-line lalo nat wala akong pambili ng smartphone na pwede sa online class, nakikigamit lang ako sa pinsan ko na nag-aaral din. Tapos mahina pa ang signal sa lugar namin."</i> (P9) (It isn't easy to study in an online class, especially since I do not have enough money to buy a smartphone for an online class. I only borrow my cousin's phone, who also has an online class. Also, our area has a weak internet connection.)</p>	No cellphone and poor internet connection
<p><i>"Sa English class kailangan talaga namin na matutong magsalita ng English, yong kagaya ng pag uusap ng normal lang hindi yong natatakot kaming magkamali dahil sa grammar naming. Eh hindi namin yon nagagawa dahil nag uusap lang kami sa chat at text."</i> (P7) (In English Class, we really need to learn to speak English, just like conversing normally ordinary where we are not worried about our grammar. However, we can not do that because we only talk through chat and text.)</p>	
<p><i>"Binabasa ko yong e-module na nadownload ko galing sa Google classroom para yong hindi ko narinig na</i></p>	

*discussion sa online class ay kahit papaano ay hindi ako mabehind at matuto rin atsaka nagtatanong din ako sa mga classmates ko.” (P5)*  
 (I am reading the e-module, which I downloaded from Google Classroom, so I will not be left behind in the lesson whenever I miss online classes. I ask my classmates too.)

Ask for assistance from classmates and friends.

Table 2. Summary of codes and themes

Codes	Themes
Learning new online platform Learning while at home Becoming more innovative	Independent Learning
Can work and study Can attend to children's needs while studying Have part-time job	Flexibility
No mobile devices for an online class Poor internet connection No internet connection	Limited access to technology
Lack of interest and involvement in online activities Lack of engagement during the discussion Worried about the grammar	Poor Peer Communication
Download the lesson posted. Use Google to search. Ask friends and relatives to explain lessons not understood.	Support system

The school system had impacted by the global crisis brought about by the COVID-19 Pandemic. Many schools were forced to close to avoid the rapid spread of the virus. Because of this crisis, the education system transitioned from face-to-face to distance learning through online classes. This sudden shift to online instruction has resulted in many consequences.

This study categorized students' experiences into favorable and unfavorable (negative) experiences. In the favorable experiences, two themes emerged from the transcribed data: independent learning and flexibility. Two themes also occurred in the unfavorable (negative) experiences, such as limited access to technology and lack of interaction. Furthermore, the support system surfaced as the emergent theme for the coping strategy.

### 3.1.1 Students' Favorable Experience in Teaching English Using Flexible Learning

#### *Theme 1: Independent learning*

The interviews show that the students have positive experiences even though the government and its agencies assigned to administer and supervise the country's educational system were unprepared to address the emergent situation caused by the COVID-19 Pandemic. Students were forced to study independently without physical contact with their teachers, and Online classes helped students study efficiently and learn to use different platforms. Furthermore, students have taken an advanced pacing plan with their work because being fully remote has taught them to become more productive and independent during their free time. As graduates of the K to12 basic education program, students are expected to possess two 21<sup>st</sup>-century skills, specifically communication and ICT skills. However, during the interview, most participants mentioned that one good thing they gained from flexible learning was that they learned to manipulate the online platforms used by their teachers during online classes. In fact, the participants' common responses were cited as follows:

*“Natuto kaming magsunikap mag aral na kami lang, yong wala kaming guro sa pamamagitan ng pag search the google.”(P2)* (We learned to study by ourselves without the presence of our teachers through surfing on Google.)

*“Ang isa sa mga natutunan ko dito sa flexible learning na way ng pagtuturo ng English ay yong kailangan mong magbasa pa, maliban sa diniskus ng teacher, kailangan kong mag search sa internet para doon sa mga rules ng grammar. Dito ko rin narealized na importante talaga ang pagbabasa kasi etong grammar rules ay naituro na sa amin mula grade school hanggang high school pero hindi pa rin namin na master. Marami pa rin sa amin ang takot magsalita ng English kasi dahil hindi kami confident sa English namin.” (P8)*

(One of the things I learned from flexible learning as a way of teaching us the English language is that I need to read more than what the teacher discussed. I need to search on the internet, specifically on the grammar rules. Also, I realized that reading is vital because these grammar rules were taught to us from grade school up to high school, but we never mastered them. Many of us are still afraid to speak using the English language because we are not confident in our speech.)

Parallel to the participants' statements, one of the strategies employed by the students to enhance their reading comprehension is to engage in more reading activities. In this context, the platforms available for content searching made students engage in reading more. This is also situated in flexible learning when students need to read and understand instructions, which enhances their reading comprehension. The student's skills gained from this instructional delivery illustrated that they developed self- and autonomous learning. Self-learning is expanding one's knowledge through independent study and individual evaluation of concepts and techniques that one feels are pertinent to one's educational needs. It comprises a systematization where the learner contributes to improving his ability to apply new knowledge in daily life. Contextually, it is referred to as integrated learning, which is useful for life (Tejada-Reyes, 2017). The success of online education among students during the Pandemic proves that online teaching has benefits in enabling students to work independently and

boost their self-efficacy. The majority claimed to have grown more independent, able to adapt to online learning, and motivated (Idris, Zulkipli, Abdul-Mumin, Ahmad, Mitha, Rahman, & Naing, 2021).

### Theme 2. Flexibility

The second emergent theme is flexibility. This theme took part in the learning setup during the pandemic period, and the students were allowed to choose their own pace of learning. In this study, students can effectively manage their time to attend classes while working, attend to children's needs, and do part-time jobs. To illustrate this, P4 does her part-time job in a bakery while attending online classes during the daytime and does her assigned tasks during her free time. In the same case, P7 shared that since the instructional delivery is flexible and mostly online, she could take care of her baby while having an online class. Also, after discussing time management in the English Plus course, P4 makes a schedule plan to divide his time to help his father's business, where he works as a part-time worker. The following are some of the participants' statements:

*“Ang na feel ko ay mix-emotion. Minsan makatakot na maka excite. Diko ini expect na ganito pala ang proseso ng flexible learning na ginagamit sa college, kasi wala ako experience noong high school. Kaya minsan hindi ko nagugustuhan yong teaching techniques. Pero ang kagandan naman nito ay kahit may work ako pwede ako mag attend ng klase. Basta nandyan lang ang cellphone mo at syempre dapat may internet connection.”* (P4)

(I have mixed emotions. Sometimes, it was a mixture of being scared but excited simultaneously. I never expected the flexible learning process in college to be like this because I had never experienced it during high school. That is why sometimes, I wouldn't say I like the teaching techniques. But, one good thing is that even if I have work, I still can attend my classes.)

*“May maganda rin naman na naidudulot ang flexible learning kasi nabigyan ng pagkakataon makapag- aral yong may mga trabaho.”* (P10) (Flexible learning has also brought benefits since those who are working can acquire education.)

*“Ang kagandahan nitong flexible learning ay nabigyan ako ng pagkakataon makapag-aral uli na diko sana magagawa kung face-to-face lang kasi diko pa pwede maiwan ng baby ko. Kaya habang nag oonline class ako, nagagawa kong alagan ang baby ko at ang iba pa niyang pangangailangan.”* (P7)

(One good thing about flexible learning is that I can study again, which I could not do face-to-face because I cannot leave my baby yet. So, while attending my online class, I can still care for my baby, including her other needs.)

The responses from the participants reflected how Shurville et al. (2008), as cited by Joan (2013), described Flexible Learning as a combination of educational philosophies and systems concerned with offering learners additional choices, convenience, and personalization to fit the learner. Flexible learning, in this context, offers students options for when, where, and how they learn.

### 3.1.2 Students' Unfavorable (negative) Experience in Teaching English Using Flexible Learning

#### Theme 3. Limited access to technology

One of the themes that emerged in the students' negative experiences with flexible learning is that the students have limited access to technology. Many Filipino students have no gadgets to use for online classes. Some could not afford to buy electronic devices such as smartphones, laptops, and other devices necessary for online courses. Another issue with having an online class is the internet connection. The majority of the participants said that they were unable to understand the teacher's discussion because of a poor internet connection. Sometimes in the middle of the class period, some students were disconnected. Thus, this greatly impacts their learning process. Most of the participants' statements are cited as follows:

*“Ang signal at ang internet connection ang isa sa mga challenges namin nitong online class, kasi kahit na flexible learning ang ginagamit ng teacher, kadalasan ay online class, lalo na sa college. Sometimes, hindi kami nakakasubmit ng tasks namin on time kasi mahina ang net connection.”* (P1)

(Signal and internet connection are two challenges we experience during online classes. Even though teachers use flexible learning, we often hold classes online, especially since we are already college students. Sometimes, we submit our tasks late because of poor internet connection.)

*“ Kadalasan hindi ako nakaka attend ng online class ko kasi mobile data lang gamit ko, tapos mahirap pa ang signal sa amin. Kailangn pa namin maghanap ng area kung saan kami mahagap ng may signal.”* (P2) (I often miss my online class since I am just using mobile data and the network signal is weak. What I usually do is to look for an area where there is a signal.)

*“Ang hirap mag-aral ng on-line lalo nat wala akong pambili ng smartphone na pwede sa online class, nakikigamit lang ako sa pinsan ko na nag-aaral din, tapos mahina pa ang signal sa lugar namin. Eh kahit pambili ng load ay nahihirapan din ako. May piso wifi na bendo, pero ilang minute lang eh ang klase ay one hour kada subject.”* (P9)

(It isn't easy to study in an online class, especially since I do not have enough money to buy a smartphone for an online class. I only borrow my cousin's phone, who also has an online class. Also, our area has a weak internet connection, and I even have difficulty buying a prepaid load. There is a wifi vending machine; however, each subject runs for an hour.)

Students nowadays, who belong to Generation Z, are digital natives. They can easily adapt to fast-changing technology; however, students at Cotabato State University are not all lucky compared to students in the neighboring universities. Our university is the only State

University in the City, and most of our students are recipients of the Free Higher Education program of the government. Internet connection is the most challenging experience since most live in different Maguindanao and Lanao Provinces and Region XI municipalities, with a notably poor internet connection. Along with this internet issue is the lack of technology devices, such as mobile phones, computers, or laptops, which are vital in online classes. These challenges are not only experienced in the Philippines, which is categorized as still a developing country, but also listed problems in other countries in Southeast Asia as pointed out by Ginting et al. (2021); they mentioned that some reported challenges were unstable internet connectivity and the lack of networking technology support.

One of the essential requirements for conducting an online teaching and learning activity is having a strong internet connection (Nugroho et al., 2021). The study showed that most students had trouble connecting to the internet. Even teachers experienced issues, particularly with slow internet connections or little bandwidth. The lack of electronics is even worse. According to Belgica, Calugan, Dumo, and Simber (2020), internet connectivity is a common issue among instructors and pupils, as the Philippines remains one of Asia's slowest internet countries. Professor Prospero de Vera, Chairperson of the Commission on Higher Education (CHED), established the importance of flexible learning. Because of issues with internet connectivity and a lack of technological gadgets used in online education, it is more inclusive than remote learning (Joaquin, Biana, & Dacela, 2020). Connectivity is not necessary for flexible learning. He claims that developing different coping mechanisms enables authorities and educational institutions to guarantee learning. However, in the CSU context, the only way we could reach out to our students is online because of the proximity of our students' locations.

#### *Theme 4. Poor Peer Communication*

Language classes must be interactive, meaning there should be peer-to-peer interaction rather than only teacher-student interaction. The lack of students' interest and involvement in online learning activities appeared to be another issue in online teaching and learning. Based on the data, this was manifested with the occasional in-and-out of the students and their lack of engagement with the discussion. To cite from the following statements:

*“ Sa English class kailangan talaga namin na matutong magsalita ng English, yong kagaya ng pag uusap ng normal lang hindi yong natatakot kaming magkamali dahil sa grammar naming. Eh hindi namin yon nagagawa dahil nag uusap lang kami sa chat at text.” (P7)*

(In English Class, we need to learn how to speak using the English Language in a conversational manner where we are no grammar errors. However, we can not do it since we only talk through text and chat.)

*“Another problem ay nahihirapan din kami pag meron mga group activities, kasi yong iba hindi nagcocooperate, kaya laging ako ang gumagaga ng task. Naghihintay na lang ang ibang group member na sa tingin ko po ay hindi nakakatulong sa amin.” (P1).*

(Another problem is the difficulty of having group activities since group members do not cooperate. With this, I often do the task alone, and some members are just waiting, and I think this does not help.)

*“Ang naoobserve ko lang talaga, marami sa amin ang ayaw magsalita or mag volunteer na mag start ng exchange ng mga ideas during online class discussion. Ang iba nagdadahilan na di nila naririnig ang discussion.” (P4)*

(I observed that most of us are unwilling to speak or volunteer to exchange ideas during online class discussions. Some have their reasons that they could not hear the discussion.)

The lack of spontaneous interaction between and amongst teachers and students and students to students is notable in online classes. Research has repeatedly concluded that without meaningful interaction with a teacher mediating or facilitating materials and knowledge and without interaction among peers, the student satisfaction rate is low, as is the course completion (Hellerstein et al. 2020). Though online courses use the advancement of technology where students become digitally inclined, not all students from Cotabato State University can afford these requirements. Since students' involvement and engagement during the discussion are vital in Language teaching, the lack and unavailability of digital and internet resources caused impacts on students' participation and achievement of the target outcomes. To ensure that the goals of language teaching will be achieved, teachers need to engage the students in many communicative situations where they can use the target language. However, with the emergence of the COVID-19 Pandemic, language teaching activities and strategies drastically change to ensure the continuity of education globally.

Furthermore, although online learning represents significant technological advancements, such platforms may hinder user interaction; hence, efforts should be made to make the learning process feasible (Idris, Zulkpli, Abdul-Mumin, Ahmad, Mitha, Rahman, & Naing, 2021). Thus, lecturers should plan effective strategies for giving online instructions to facilitate feedback and encourage students to ask questions, such as constantly reminding and prompting their students to participate in online discussions, quizzes and make the online sessions dynamic, interesting, and interactive (Dewi, & Wajdi, 2021).

Nugroho, Ilmiani, and Rekha (2021) found that the lack of students' motivation and engagement to join online learning activities is a prevalent issue. As for this challenge, the results of data analysis showed that almost all participants suggested designing more interesting activities focusing on student-centered learning and improving the efficacy of teaching methods and strategies.

#### *3.2 Coping Strategies of the Students during the Covid-19 Pandemic*

During the interview, the students were asked how they cope with the challenges of the Flexible Learning design in teaching English. Each student adopted specific strategies they used to cope with the challenges. Since there have been many issues in delivering instruction in the flexible learning modality, teachers also ensured that they could still give their students the best, which may help them cope with

this emergent situation. Based on the result of the transcribed interview transcript, the only theme that emerged is the support system, which includes downloading the lesson posted in the Google Classroom (e-module & pre-recorded videos), using the Google search engine, and asking friends and relatives. This theme is supported by the statements of the participants, such as follows:

*“Binabasa ko yong e-module na ndownload ko galing sa Google classroom para yong hindi ko narinig na discussion sa online class ay kahit papaano ay hindi ako mabehind at matuto rin atsaka nagtatanong din ako sa mga classmates ko .” (P5)*

(I am reading the e-module, which I downloaded from Google Classroom, so I will not be left behind in the lesson whenever I miss online classes. Also, I ask my classmates too.)

*“Usually, pag hindi ako nakapasok sa online class, nagchachat ako sa aming Facebook Group Chat kung ano ang nadiscuss sa class. Minsan kasi ang professor namin if may problema sa internet connection during sa online class ang ginagawa niya, ang nagpopost siya ng questions sa Google Classroom at doon kami nagtatype ng mga sagot namin. Tapos nagreply din ang professor doon sa mga posted comments namin. Ang maganda lang sa ginagawa ng English professor namin ay anytime na mag online kami pwede kami magpost ng comment. Minsan sinasagot namin ang mga posted comments din ng aming mga classmates. Tapos pag may new topic na, ang professor namin magpost na end na ang discussion.” (P10)*

(Usually, If I cannot join the online class, I chat with my classmates through our Facebook group chat to ask what was discussed during the online course. Sometimes, if we encounter a problem with the internet connection during the online class, our professor posts questions in Google Classroom, where we can post our answers. Then the professor also replies to our posted comments. One good thing that our professor did was that we could post our comments anytime when we could access an internet connection. Sometimes, we also post comments on our classmates' responses. If there were new topics to be discussed, our professor posts a comment to end the discussion.)

According to the codes of the theme that emerged, it is observed that when students encounter difficulties using the flexible learning modality for teaching English, they typically conduct a Google search. It is purposely gaged to learn more about the subject, especially if their internet connection is poor or weak. Another coping strategy they used was downloading the e-modules and pre-recorded videos uploaded by the English instructors and professor to the Google Classroom so that the students could access them anytime they had a strong internet connection. They also used the Facebook group chat to reach their classmates and ask about the lessons or topics they hardly understand. Further, they even asked their friends or relatives who could explain the subject if they did not understand them.

These results are parallel to the study of Barrot, Llenares, and Del Rosario (2021), who found that students' responses suggest that their online learning challenges and strategies were mediated by the resources available to them, their interaction with their teachers and peers, and the school's existing policies and guidelines for online learning.

#### 4. Implication

The rapid spread of COVID-19 caused schools to switch from face-to-face instruction to online learning. This sudden transition resulted in different experiences for students encompassing difficulties in achieving learning targets amidst the demands of flexible learning. Poor internet connection, lack of electronic devices used in online classes, and lack of peer communication, which are cited as essential to language teaching and learning, are the common experiences of the students. However, home study promotes autonomous learning, enhances students' reading abilities, and develops their ICT skills despite these requirements. Flexible learning design was considered the most convenient teaching modality for teachers and students at the height of the global crises. Furthermore, responses showed that flexible learning design still cannot replace face-to-face teaching and learning, especially at Cotabato State University, which caters to students mostly dependent on school grants and scholarships to finish their studies.

#### Acknowledgments

The author would like to thank the Administration of Cotabato State University through the Office of the Research Programs for supporting this study by allocating funds to conduct this endeavor. Moreover, acknowledgment is also given to a professional in linguistics who proofread this manuscript.

**Competing Interest:** The Author declares that the publication of this paper does not involve any conflicts of interest.

#### References

- Adeniyi, S., & Kuku, O. (2023). Psychosocial impact of COVID-19 on achievement of adolescents with hearing impairment in English language. *JOALL Journal of Applied Linguistics and Literature*, 8(1), 75-88. <https://doi.org/10.33369/joall.v8i1.23223>
- Alea, L., Fabrea, M., Roldan, R., & Farooqi, A. (2020). Teachers' Covid-19 awareness, distance learning education experiences and perceptions towards institutional readiness and challenges. *International Journal of Learning, Teaching and Educational Research*, 19(6), 127-144. <https://doi.org/10.26803/ijlter.19.6.8>
- Barrot, J., Llenares, I., & Del Rosario, L. S. (2021). Students' online learning challenges during the Pandemic and how they cope with them: The case of the Philippines. *Education and Information Technologies*, 26(6), 7321-7338. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10639-021-10589-x>
- Belgica, C., Calugan, J. A., Dumo, J. U., & Simber, L. (2020, December). *Online distance learning: Thematic study on the challenges faced by Educare College Inc. primary pupils*. In Proceedings of the 3rd International Conference on Advanced Research in Education, Teaching & Learning, Oxford, UK.

- Bernard, R. M., Abrami, P. C., Borokhovski, E., Wade, C. A., Tamim, R. M., Surkes, M. A., & Bethel, E. C. (2009). A Meta-Analysis of Three Types of Interaction Treatments in Distance Education. *Review of Educational Research*.  
<https://doi.org/10.3102/0034654309333844>
- Cervantes, F. L. (2020). CHED pushes for flexible learning for HEIs in August [News]. Retrieved from  
<https://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1101519>
- Cortes, S. T. (2020). Flexible Learning as an Instructional Modality in Environmental Science Course during COVID-19. *Aquademia*, 4(2), ep20024. <https://doi.org/10.29333/aquademia/8444>
- Dewi, M. P., & Wajdi, M. B. N. (2021). Distance Learning Policy During Pandemic Covid-19. *EDUTECH: Journal of Education And Technology*, 4(3), 325-333. <https://doi.org/10.29062/edu.v4i3.192>
- Di Pietro, G., Biagi, F., Costa, P., Karpiński, Z., & Mazza, J. (2020). *The likely impact of Covid-19 on education: Reflection based on the existing literature and recent international datasets* (Vol. 30275). JRC Technical report: European Commission.
- Ginting, D., Fahmi, Y. B., Linarsih, A., & Hamdani, B. (2021). Foreign language students' voices on blended learning and fully online classes during the COVID-19 pandemic. *World*, 11(2). <https://doi.org/10.5430/wjel.v11n2p62>
- Hellerstein, D., Waldman, T., Solomon, H. J., & Arnon, M. (2020). When Students Can Choose: Online Self-Study or In-College Learning of English for Academic Purposes. *World Journal of English Language*, 10(2). <https://doi.org/10.5430/wjel.v10n2p25>
- Huber, S. G., & Helm, C. (2020). COVID-19 and schooling: evaluation, assessment, and accountability in times of crises—reacting quickly to explore key issues for policy, practice, and research with the school barometer. *Educational Assessment Evaluation and Accountability*, 32(3), 37-270. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11092-020-09322-y>
- Idris, F., Zulklipl, I. N., Abdul-Mumin, K. H., Ahmad, S. R., Mitha, S., Rahman, H. A., ... Naing, L. (2021). Academic experiences, the physical and mental health impact of COVID-19 Pandemic on students and lecturers in health care education. *BMC Medical Education*, 21(1), 1-13. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12909-021-02968-2>
- Joan, D. R. (2013). Flexible Learning as New Learning Design in Classroom Process to Promote Quality Education. *Journal on School Educational Technology*, 9(1), 37-42. <https://doi.org/10.26634/jsch.9.1.2401>
- Joaquin, J. J. B., Biana, H. T., & Dacela, M. A. (2020). The Philippine higher education sector in the time of COVID-19. *Frontiers in Education*. <https://doi.org/10.3389/educ.2020.576371>
- Leeb, R. T., Bitsko, R. H., Radhakrishnan, L., Martinez, P., Njai, R., & Holland, K. M. (2020). Mental health–related emergency department visits among children aged <18 years during the COVID-19 Pandemic. *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*, 69(45), 1675-1680. <https://doi.org/10.15585/mmwr.mm6945a3>
- Nugroho, A., Ilmiani, D., & Rekha, A. (2021). EFL teachers' challenges and insights of online teaching amidst the global Pandemic. *Metathesis: Journal of English Language, Literature, and Teaching*, 4(3), 277-291. <https://doi.org/10.31002/metathesis.v4i3.3195>
- Pace, C., Pettit, S. K., & Barker, K. S. (2020). Best Practices in Middle-Level Quaranteaching: Strategies, Tips, and Resources Amidst COVID-19. *Becoming: Journal of the Georgia Association for Middle-Level Education*, 31(1), Article 2.  
<https://doi.org/10.20429/becoming.2020.310102>
- Pinar, F. I. L. (2021). Grade 12 students' perceptions of distance learning in general chemistry subject: An evidence from the Philippines. *International Journal of Theory and Application in Elementary and Secondary School Education*, 3(1), 44-61.  
<https://doi.org/10.31098/ijtaese.v3i1.509>
- Rotas, E., & Cahapay, M. (2020). Difficulties in remote learning: voices of Philippine university students in the wake of COVID-19 crisis. *Asian Journal of Distance Education*, 15(2), 147-158.
- Tarrayo, V. N., Paz, R. M. O., & Gepila Jr, E. C. (2021). The shift to flexible learning amidst the Pandemic: the case of English language teachers in a Philippine state university. *Innovation in Language Learning and Teaching*, 1-14.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/17501229.2021.1944163>
- Tejada- Reyes, V. (2019). *Self-Learning Techniques to Contribute to the Students' Learning of the English Language*. Online Submission.

## Copyrights

Copyright for this article is retained by the author(s), with first publication rights granted to the journal.

This is an open-access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).