

READINESS AMONG TESL PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS IN ESL ONLINE TEACHING

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Abstract

The COVID-19 pandemic has put a halt to the traditional face-to-face class engagement for educational institutions throughout the country. This situation has also severely affected educational faculties that require students to carry out their practicum service, TESL pre-service teachers are one of the many that are struggling to cope with this crisis as what they have been training for has not prepared them for teaching online classes. This study aims to investigate TESL pre-service teachers' readiness to conduct ESL online classes and further find out what challenges they face in teaching online. In order to gather the data for this study, a triangulated mixed method research approach has been used that includes an online close-ended questionnaire that consists of 20 questions on TESL pre-service teachers' readiness to conduct ESL online classes and interview sessions with 12 TESL pre-service teachers regarding the challenges of teaching ESL online classes. The quantitative data has been analysed by using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences for Windows (SPSS) software while the qualitative data has been analysed by implementing the thematic analysis approach. The findings revealed that a significant number of the TESL pre-service teachers are not ready to teach students through online approaches and methods and agreed that they have not been exposed to the techniques to teach ESL online classes and require training on it. Thus, this study recommends that the university and faculty introduce a new subject for TESL pre-service teachers on the pedagogical methods and approaches to teach ESL online classes. Thus, this study is significant for the university and faculty to identify the readiness of TESL pre-service teachers in teaching online classes.

Keywords: TESL pre-service teachers, readiness, practicum service, ESL online teaching, ESL online classes

INTRODUCTION

TESL pre-service teachers are individuals who enrolled in the education program and they are still under training before they are given awarded a teaching license. The COVID-19 is spreading all around the world including Malaysia. Due to the rising cases of COVID-19, Malaysian government has made an announcement for the lockdown and it dramatically changed all the sectors in Malaysia especially for the education sectors. The Ministry of Education advised all the institutions to take the initiative in replacing the teaching process from the traditional teaching sessions to online teaching sessions. However, online teaching is not a common situation for pre-service teachers as they have been taught to teach in a physical classroom. It can be proven by Singh & Thurman (2019) that the transition to online teaching was unexpected and chaotic for secondary teachers and students, given that online learning has not been clearly established. The sudden changes of the learning process make a lot of changes such as the way on how teachers and students interact between themselves, the module of the lessons and it is obviously making the students understand less about the lessons. According to Lie (2020) the teachers lack resources to engage in online learning, and many students do not have access to internet connections and the necessary gadgets. Most of the TESL pre-service teachers do not have enough instruments such as Internet connections and laptop in order to conducting the online class. These problems clearly make the TESL pre-service teachers are unprepared in teaching online. As McAllister & Graham (2016) had stated that teachers often do not have knowledge of online pedagogy or how to promote online learning, as it is not included in many teacher trainings programs. According to Goktas, Yildirim and Yildirim (2008), teacher education training programs have battled with choosing and selecting the best techniques on how to get ready for pre-service teachers to implement technology into their online teaching. Therefore, this study identifies the readiness of TESL pre-service teachers in teaching online and give some suggestions to the university and faculty to improve the teacher training programs. Therefore, this study will examine the following research questions:

RQ 1: Are TESL pre-service teachers ready to conduct online classes?

RQ 2: What are the challenges faced by TESL pre-service teachers in teaching online?

LITERATURE REVIEW

The World Health Organisation (WHO) has declared COVID-19 a Public Health Emergency on 30 January and on 11 March 2020 it was later declared as a global pandemic. On 18 March 2020, the Prime Minister of Malaysia declared that the country would go on a full lockdown thus the Movement Control Order was implemented. The education sector is one of the many sectors that has taken a severe toll. Many educational institutions of all levels; schools, colleges, and universities, had to make a transition to online learning platforms in order to prevent academic loss (Sahoo, 2020). According to Ferdig (2020), teachers were suddenly obliged to offer full online teaching which felt foreign for both them and their students. As online teaching was not clearly defined the transition to online learning for educators and students was sudden and chaotic (Singh & Thurman, 2019). Primarily due to the lack of clarification and transparency, practices that could guide to the transition was minimal. In certain cases, teachers do not have sufficient knowledge on online pedagogy or how to promote online learning because it is not part of many teachers training programmes (McAllister & Graham, 2016). Most school teachers therefore have a shallow knowledge of online learning and teaching experience. According to Howard et. al (2020), teacher's expertise that needs to be improved would include knowledge of new technology and activities to be included in online learning (e.g., asynchronous discussion tasks, online research tasks, video lectures or live video discussions). Regarding online education, issues that may rise would include on how to provide clear instruction, how to communicate better, and how to evaluate learning more effectively (Gurley, 2018).

Readiness to Teach Online

Various institutions use a tool for evaluating the readiness of their faculty to learn online, but most of these are not systematically studied or empirically tested. Online learning does not only include the usage of technologies but also separate pedagogical methods as compared to the face-to-face teaching pedagogies in order to promote online learning (Gurley, 2018). Gay (2016) analysed the measurement of e-learning preparation of online teachers before, after and after the lesson. They concluded that there is a desperate need of online teachers to have online support. A study conducted by Lichoro (2015) found out that teachers feel inadequately prepared to teach online. Nevertheless, there is a need for competences to train teachers in order for teaching online to be established, thus this would provide guidelines for training teachers to teach online. Taking into account the readiness and preparation of educators and their perception of preparing pre-service teachers in a completely online setting, Downing and Dymont (2013) found that teachers considered online teaching to be time consuming. Based on their study, it was revealed that teachers who are new to online teaching felt that they were not ready to teach online and required technical and pedagogical support as well as strategies for time-management. Therefore, in this study readiness will be analysed in three different aspects: (1) TESL pre-service teachers' knowledge on online teaching pedagogies, (2) their confidence to teach online and (3) their attitude towards online teaching.

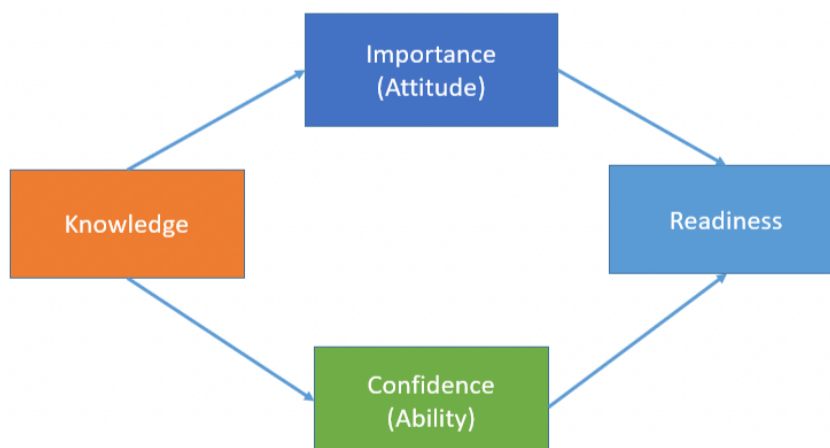


Figure 1: Theoretical framework for readiness among TESL pre-service teachers in online teaching. Adapted from Health Behavior Change e-Book, by S. Rollnick, P. Mason, and C. C. Butler, 2010: Elsevier Health Sciences.

Knowledge

According to Ben-Peretz, M. (2011) as cited in Shulman (1986) has defined a teacher knowledge as “a body of professional knowledge that encompasses both knowledge of general pedagogical principles and skills and knowledge of the subject matter to be taught” (p. 54). Knowledge of online teaching and physical teaching are very different in terms of the content knowledge, the way teachers deliver the knowledge and the students’ assessments. Based on Mohamad Nasri, Husnin, Mahmud & Halim (2020) highlighted that teachers were supposed to use the technology in teaching to maintain the quality of learning for the student teachers, who were required to follow the remote learning online. In teaching, pre-service teachers are supposed to know the content of the knowledge introduced by Mishra and Koehler (2008) which indicates the subject of the lesson, pedagogical knowledge which is referring to the methods on how the preservice teachers manage the classroom. However, another

framework discussed by Mishra and Koehler (2008) also stated that pre-service teachers must have the knowledge of the technology which will be used in the classroom.

Confidence

Confidence means something that can be trusted and believed. In teaching, a teacher's confidence is essential as it would positively affect students' accomplishment and attitudes in the classroom. It can be proven by Martin, Budhrani & Wang (2019) as cited from Lee Tsai (2010) which have stated that confidence is defined as the views or beliefs of teachers about their teaching ability which is connected to the use of teaching methods and instructional leadership. According to Northcote, Gosselin, & Reynaud (2015) also mentioned that online teaching capability could lead to the development of tools and information responds to the need of teacher training and based on Wallac (2004) stated that online teaching skill could help to explain how the potential of teachers determine what they do when they are teaching online. In addition, teachers also have high confidence in teaching when they have enough knowledge of the lesson. Nevertheless, confidence is also based not only on the subjects' understanding but also on a teacher's teaching skills— teachers with low confidence struggle more challenging to make sure that students learn better in the classroom.

Attitude

Attitude can be described as an aspect that drives a person's behaviour in accordance with his feelings and thoughts (Semerci and Aydin, 2018). This actively demonstrates that attitude of an educator or teacher is significant to develop and create an online environment that encourage students to learn better in classroom. Due to the sudden transition, teachers must change their attitudes or behaviour in online teaching. Students tend to enjoy and learn better in classroom whenever teachers or educators show some positive attitudes towards them. It can be proven by Volery (2000) stated that students tend to enjoy the learning process whenever the teacher show some positive attitudes toward the online teaching. According to Martin, Budhrani & Wang (2019) has revealed that previous experience with online teaching, accessibility of online classes, enhanced training and facilities, input from students, and flexibility of time and teaching schedules are other factors affecting the positive attitudes of faculty towards online teaching. However, teachers and students also may build relationships of mutual respect and trust using effective attitudes. Teachers also can influence students by showing some kindness, accept the diversity of students and inspired students to be more creative in classroom. These positive attitudes can further strengthen the relationship between students and teachers. Based on Martin, Budhrani & Wang (2019) as cited in Denis, Watland, Pirote, and Verday (2004) have highlighted that faculty position efficiency that facilitates interaction between students and creates the most important relationship between students and teachers. Even so, attitudes have a significant impact on teachers' training and performance.

METHODOLOGY

Based on Cresswell (2009), research designs are plans and the procedures for research to detailed methods of data collection and analysis. This study has adopted the triangulation research method, whereby the quantitative data is supported by the qualitative data and theoretical framework that has been adapted from Rollnick, Mason & Butler (2010). According to Nightingale (2020), triangulation is a methodology used for various techniques of gathering data to analysis the findings of the same sample. It is used to boost validity, to provide a more vivid understanding of a problem in research and

to question various ways of interpreting a problem in research. She further stated that there are three types of triangulations: convergence, complementarity, and divergence. This study has specifically implemented the complementarity type of triangulation which allows a richer image of the outcomes of the study by presenting information to each other on results from various approaches.

This study was participated by TESL pre-service teachers from UNISEL. The participants had taken the teacher training course for three (3) years before pursuing their practicum service and also had experienced in teaching online. Thirty (30) TESL pre-service teachers volunteered to participate in answering the questionnaire while twelve (12) TESL pre-service teachers were selected randomly for the interview session.

Based on Matthews and Ross (2010) questionnaires are described as a collection of questions that research participants may answer in a collection of ways to collect already structured data and may include closed and open questions. This research has implemented twenty closed-ended questions regarding (1) TESL pre-service teachers' knowledge on online teaching pedagogies, (2) their confidence to teach online and (3) their attitude towards online teaching. The Likert scale was implemented in order to collect data; 1= Strongly Disagree, 2= Disagree, 3= Agree and 4= Strongly Agree. The questions have been adapted from Pritchard (2017) and Cutri et.al (2020). The questionnaire has used the Google-form platform to enable participants to submit their responses. All of the participants had answered the questionnaire based on their experience in teaching ESL using online platforms.

In order to check the reliability of the questionnaire, a reliability test was done. The Cronbach's alpha value for the overall questionnaire is 0.84 while the values for the variables are as followed: 0.63 for confidence in teaching online, 0.74 for knowledge in teaching online, 0.50 for knowledge in planning online classes, and 0.52 for attitude towards online teaching. Thus, the instrument used in this study is reliable.

A semi-structured interview was used in this study to provide the participants the opportunity to prepare for the interview session. The interview questions were designed related to the research objectives and research questions. The questions were regarding on TESL pre-service teachers' readiness for online teaching and the challenges they face for online teaching. The interview questions were given to the participants one-day prior the interview session. This is to ensure that the participants are aware of the questions and therefore given the opportunity to answer the interview questions based on their own experience. The participants were all interviewed separately.

Data Analysis

The data of this study were collected through both the quantitative and qualitative approach. The quantitative data gained from the questionnaire was based on the Likert scale and was arranged accordingly such as; 1= Strongly Disagree, 2= Disagree, 3= Agree and 4= Strongly Agree. The data then was coded and analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences for Windows (SPSS) software. The descriptive analysis approach was then incorporated to illustrate the findings thoroughly. The qualitative data of this research was collected through interview sessions and later coded using the thematic analysis. According to Braun and Clarke (2006) the thematic analysis conducted is based on the answers given by participants, and it would be divided into two aspects which are frequency and themes. There are seven (7) interview questions which were created based on the pre-service teachers' readiness in teaching online. The interview session will be recorded and transcribed.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Questionnaire

Table 1 summarizes TESL pre-service teachers' readiness in terms of knowledge in teaching online, knowledge in planning online, and confidence in teaching online which mean scores are all mostly below 2.50. TESL pre-service teachers' attitude towards online teaching however revealed a slightly higher mean score obtaining a total of 3.29. This answers Research Question 1 of this study which is on to discover if TESL pre-service teachers are ready to teach online classes. The findings revealed that TESL pre-service teachers perceive themselves as not ready to begin to teach online as they lack knowledge and training to teaching online classes, thus they prefer to either return to the traditional face-to-face class or have training on how to teach online.

Table 1: Overall Mean Scores for TESL Pre-Service Teachers' Readiness to Teach Online

TESL Pre-Service Teachers' Readiness to Teach Online	Overall Mean
Knowledge in Teaching Online	2.18
Knowledge in Planning Online Classes	2.38
Confidence in Teaching Online	2.24
Attitude towards Online Teaching	3.29

Quantitative Data Report

Table 2 below reveals the data the collected on TESL pre-service teachers' knowledge in teaching online. In general, a significant number of respondents do not have adequate knowledge to teach online classes. Item 11 which is regarding whether TESL pre-service teachers have been exposed to the teaching approaches and techniques to teach an online class, the mean score obtained is 2.00, 83.3% of the respondents revealed that they lack exposure to the teaching approaches and techniques to teach an online class while only 16.6% revealed otherwise. For item 12 which is regarding on whether TESL pre-service teachers are able to create methods of teaching that utilize the affordances of online teaching, the mean score obtained is 2.07, 86.7% of the respondents revealed that they are unable to create new methods of teaching that utilize the affordances of online teaching while 13.3% agreed with the statement. Item 13 which is regarding whether TESL pre-service teachers' confidence in their ability to differentiate instruction during online classes, the mean score obtained is 2.30, 73.3% of the respondents revealed that they not confident in differentiating instructions during online classes while 26.6% revealed that they are confident. For item 14, which is on whether TESL pre-service teachers are confident in their ability to analyse data from students' assessments online, the mean score obtained is the highest which is 2.40, 60% of the respondents are not confident in analysing data from students' assessments online while 40% revealed that they are confident.

Table 2: TESL Pre-Service Teachers’ Knowledge in Teaching Online

Item: Knowledge in Teaching Online	N	M	ST.D	Percentage (%)			
				SD	D	A	SA
11. I am exposed to the teaching approaches and techniques to teach an online class.	30	2.00	.72	23.3	60.0	13.3	3.3
12. I can create new methods of teaching that utilize the affordances of online teaching.	30	2.07	.58	10.0	76.7	10.0	3.3
13. I am confident in my ability to differentiate instruction during online classes.	30	2.30	.53	-	73.3	23.3	3.3
14. I am confident in my ability to analyse data from students’ assessments online.	30	2.40	.62	3.3	56.7	36.7	3.3

Table 3 below reveals the data the collected on TESL pre-service teachers’ knowledge in online classes. Generally, a significant number of respondents do not have adequate knowledge to plan online classes. Item 15 is about whether TESL pre-service teachers have received training in online instruction, the mean score obtained is 2.23, 70% of the respondents revealed that they have not received training in online instruction while 30% agreed that they have received training. For item 16, which is on TESL pre-service teachers’ ability to plan online lessons that align with content standards, the mean score obtained is the highest which is 2.50, 63.3% of the respondents disagreed with the statement while 36.7% revealed that they are able to plan online lessons that align with content standards. Item 17 is regarding TESL pre-service teachers’ confidence in their ability to make the online class interesting and fun, the mean score obtained 2.43, 60% of the respondents revealed that they are not confident to make their online classes interesting and fun while 40% disagreed with the statement.

Table 3: TESL Pre-Service Teachers’ Knowledge in Planning Online Classes

Item: Knowledge in Planning Online Classes	N	M	ST.D	Percentage (%)			
				SD	D	A	SA
15. I have received training in online instruction.	30	2.23	.57	6.7	63.3	30.0	-
16. I am able to plan online lessons that align with content standards.	30	2.50	.68	-	63.3	26.7	10.0
17. I am confident in my ability to make the online class interesting and fun.	30	2.43	.50	-	60.0	40.0	-

Table 4 below presents the data collected on TESL pre-service teachers’ confidence in teaching online. Generally, the respondents reveal that they are not confident in teaching ESL online classes. Item 1 is regarding on TESL pre-service teachers’ confidence to teach online classes, the mean score obtained is 2.03, 82.7% of the respondents revealed that they are not confident to teach online classes while only 13.3% revealed that they are confident. For item 2, which is on whether TESL pre-service teachers feel comfortable to communicate online and feel confident to execute the lesson clearly, the mean score obtained is 2.37, 66.6% of the respondents disagreed with the statement thus revealing that they do not feel comfortable communicating online and feel unable to execute the lesson clearly while 33.4% feel otherwise. Item 3 is about whether TESL pre-service teachers have established a comfortable way of teaching online, the mean score obtained is the highest which is 3.00, 80% of the

respondents revealed that they have not established a comfortable way to teach online classes while only 20% claim to have established their preferred teaching style for online classes.

For item 4, which is regarding whether online teaching will compromise TESL pre-service teachers' teaching persona and presence that they usually maintain during in-person instruction, the mean score obtained is 2.57, 50% of the respondents agreed with the statement while another 50% disagreed with the statement. Item 5 is regarding on TESL pre-service teachers' confidence in their ability to manage students' behaviour during online classes, the mean score obtained is 2.10, 73.4% of the respondents revealed that they do not feel confident to manage students' behaviour during online classes while 26.7% revealed otherwise. For item 6, which is on whether TESL pre-service teachers are confident in their ability to engage with students during online classes, the mean score obtained is 2.30, 66.6% of the respondents are not confident with their ability to engage with students during online classes while 33.3% feel confident. Item 7 is about TESL pre-service teachers' confidence in their ability to teach high- and low- performing students during online classes, the mean score obtained is 2.10, 83.4% of the respondents revealed that they do not feel confident to teach high- and low-performing students during online classes while only 16.7% feel confident in doing so.

Item 8 is regarding TESL pre-service teachers' confidence in their ability to teach students who have potential inequitable access to online learning necessities, the mean score obtained is 2.00, 83.4% of the respondents disagreed with the statement thus revealing that they do not feel confident to teach students who have potential inequitable access to online learning necessities, only 16.7% agreed that they are confident to overcome the situation. For item 9, which is on TESL pre-service teachers' confidence to work with students with behavioural or mental health concerns during online classes, the mean score obtained is the lowest which is 1.83, 93.3% of the respondents revealed that they are not confident to handle students with behavioural or mental health concerns during online classes while only 6.7% feel that they are confident to teach students of the said category. Item 10, which is regarding on TESL pre-service teachers' confidence to work with students who have learning disabilities in online classes, the mean score obtained is 2.10, 70% of the respondents revealed that they are not confident to work with students who have learning disabilities in online classes while 30% revealed that they are confident to teach students with learning disabilities in online classes.

Table 4: TESL Pre-Service Teachers' Confidence in Teaching Online

	N	M	ST.D	Percentage (%)			
				SD	D	A	SA
1. Based on your preparation on becoming a teacher so far, how confident are you that you are ready to teach online classes?	30	2.03	.49	10	72.7	13.3	-
2. I feel comfortable communicating online and feel that I'm able to execute the lesson clearly.	30	2.37	.67	3.3	63.3	26.7	6.7
3. I have not yet established a comfortable way of teaching online.	30	3.00	.64	-	20.0	60.0	20.0
4. Online teaching will compromise the teaching persona and presence that I usually maintain during in-person instruction.	30	2.57	.73	3.3	46.7	40.0	10.0
5. I am confident in my ability to manage students' behaviour during online classes.	30	2.10	.66	16.7	56.7	26.7	-

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6. I am confident in my ability to engage with students during online classes.	30	2.30	.53	3.3	63.3	33.3	-
7. I am confident in my ability to teach both high- and low performing students during online classes.	30	2.10	.48	6.7	76.7	16.7	-
8. I am confident in my ability to teach students who have potential inequitable access to online learning necessities (e.g., internet access; device access; safe place to learn, etc.).	30	2.00	.59	16.7	66.7	16.7	-
9. I am confident in my ability to work with students with behavioral or mental health concerns during online classes.	30	1.83	.53	23.3	70.0	6.7	-
10. I am confident in my ability to work with students who have learning disabilities in online classes.	30	2.10	.71	20.0	50.0	30.0	-

Table 5 below reveals the data the collected on TESL pre-service teachers' attitude towards online teaching. In general, a significant number of respondents do not prefer online teaching and would want proper training to online teaching if they must proceed with online classes. For item 18 which is regarding whether TESL pre-service teachers would prefer to return to the traditional teaching mode, the mean score obtained is the highest which is 3.43, 93.4% of the respondents agreed that they would rather return to the traditional face-to-face teaching mode while only 6.7% disagreed with the statement. Item 19, which is on whether TESL pre-service teachers are interested in learning from experts on online teaching, the mean score obtained is 3.23, 93.3% of the respondents are interested in learning from experts in online teaching to transition my course and content to an online format while only 6.7% are not interested in learning from experts. Item 20, which is regarding whether TESL pre-service teachers feel that there is a need for a new course/subject dedicated to the approaches to teach an online class to be introduced, the mean score recorded is 3.20, 60% agreed that a subject dedicated to the approaches to teach an online class should be introduced while 40% of the respondents disagreed with the statement.

Table 5: TESL Pre-Service Teachers' Attitude towards Online Teaching

Item: Attitude towards Online Teaching	N	M	ST.D	Percentage (%)			
				SD	D	A	SA
18. I would rather return to the regular mode of teaching which is the traditional face-to-face.	30	3.43	.82	-	6.7	36.7	56.7
19. I am interested in learning from experts in online teaching to transition my course and content to an online format.	30	3.23	.57	-	6.7	63.3	30.0
20. I feel like there is a need to introduce a course/subject that is dedicated to the approaches to teach an online class.	30	3.20	.55	-	6.7	66.7	23.3

Interview

Table 6: Interview Question 1

Main Category	Themes & description
Methods in communicate with students. (Interview Question 1)	<u>Theme 1: Ask questions randomly</u> TESL pre-service teachers ask a lot of questions to the students.
	<u>Theme 2: Conferencing application</u> TESL pre-service teachers use online platforms to teach online.

Theme 2: Conferencing application

The theme of conferencing application was defined based from the transcripts of pre-service teacher response. Most of the pre-service teachers explain that they used the online platforms such as Google-meet, Zoom, WhatsApp group and Skype to teach students. However, the pre-service teachers also were being exposed to use the online platforms by their faculty or universities. The online platforms are very easy for them to use as it is user friendly. In order to use the online platforms in conducting the classes, TESL pre-service teacher must plan their class period. It is because some of the platforms have the limited time for teachers to record their class session. It can be identified based on the respondents who stated that:

“We use the zoom platform but first we actually need to schedule our class on the website or else our class will only until 40 minutes” - Respondent 4.

“So far, I’ve been using a couple of platforms program like for example Google-meet, Skype, I’ve been using Zoom platform. It suits my meet because I can record my classes and it is user friendly.” - Respondent 6.

Table 7: Interview Question 2

Main Category	Themes & description
Techniques in communicating with students during online classes (Interview Question 2)	<u>Theme 1: Keep track on students</u> TESL pre-service teachers keep asking students during online classes
	<u>Theme 2: Lack of exposure</u> TESL pre-service teachers did not being introduce in online classes.
	<u>Theme 3: Methods in teaching</u> TESL pre-service teacher use vary methods to teach online

Theme 2: Lack of exposure

The theme of lack of exposure was determined based from the transcription of the pre-service teachers' answers. Most of the pre-service teachers were not being exposed on the online teaching communication skills. They felt difficulties to teach online as they did not know on how to communicate with their students during online classes. Most of them were struggling to apply the traditional method to ensure that the class went smoothly. This can be seen based on several responses below:

“We were not being fully exposed to that so I’m afraid not. I don’t really know what the right appropriate approaches to use are.” - Respondent 2.

“Like I said before, online class is very hard because umm it is new for us so the approaches *pun*, I think it is different. You as a teacher have to deal with technologies so I do not really know the real approaches.” - Respondent 9.

Table 8: Interview Question 3

Main Category	Themes & description
Approaches in managing online classes (Interview Question 3)	<u>Theme 1: Keep on time</u> TESL pre-service teachers must follow the timeline during online classes.
	<u>Theme 2: Difficulties in managing the classroom</u> TESL pre-service teachers did not know the real methods or approaches in teaching online.
	<u>Theme 3: Mind mapping</u> TESL pre-service teacher use mind mapping methods to teach online.

Theme 2: Difficulties in managing the classroom

Pre-service teachers frequently express the difficulties in managing the classroom when conducting online classes. This theme can be found based on the responses given by pre-service teachers during interview session. Most of the pre-service teachers explain that they faced the difficulties in online teaching because they cannot monitor and control every student in classroom. Most of students also easily get distracted with others application in their own gadgets. It can be proven based on some respondents below:

“To be frank, I don’t. Because, even in our teaching course classes, we were not being taught on how to handle the pupils through online platforms. We can only do as much as we can in trying to manage them through the screen.” - Respondent 2.

“Managing students is very hard because you know in their handphone or gadgets they have games, so it is hard for me to make them focus in class. They usually will get distracted to the games.” - Respondent 9.

Table 9: Interview Question 4

Main Category	Themes & description
Reasons causing the difficulties in conducting online classes. (Interview Question 4)	<u>Theme 1: Lack of guidance</u> TESL pre-service teachers do not get enough guidance from their faculty.

Theme 1: Lack of guidance

The theme of lack of guidance was identified based from the pre-service teachers answers of interview questions. All the pre-service teachers interpret that they did not get any guidance from their universities or faculty to conduct online classes. It is because of the sudden transition.

Physical classroom and online classroom were two different environments and most of the preservice teachers were being taught to teach students using the physical environment class. Most of the pre-service teachers also explain that they encounter the difficulties in teaching online as they did not know on how to manage students. Most of pre-service teachers only teach the students based on their own creativity and they also apply the way their lecturer taught them in class. Some respondents stated that:

“Not really, like there’s no such a specific guide or specific course or specific subject or instruction on how to you know teach students using online platforms. So, I just apply our lecturer teach us in classes.” - Respondent 3.

“As far as I can remember, we were not given concrete guidance or instructions on how to teach online classes. Even at the current moment, our lesson plans are based on the physical class environment.” - Respondent 2.

“Nope, not really. I just copied how my lecturer conducted the class. But really, they don’t give me the guidance to teach online.” - Respondent 7.

“They only give us example platforms to use but we still do not have enough guidance to conduct like we do not know how to manage students, how to talk to students.” - Respondent 10.

Table 10: Interview Question 5

Main Category	Themes & description
Teachers' resources	<u>Theme 1: Sufficient resources</u>
(Interview	TESL pre-service teacher have enough equipment to teach online
Question 5)	<u>Theme 2: Laptop problem</u>
	TESL pre-service teachers encounter laptop problem during teaching session.
	<u>Theme 3: Internet connection problem</u>
	TESL pre-service teachers face internet connection problem in conducting online classroom.

Theme 1: Sufficient resources

The theme of sufficient resources was described based from the transcription of the pre-service teachers answer. Most of the pre-service teacher have enough equipment and tools such as laptop, speaker and many more. They even master in using the online platforms such as Zoom, Skype and Google-meet. It is can be seen based from some responses:

“The basic stuff is like phone, laptop, if possible, a tab, those kinds of technologies where you can use this software is like google-meet, zoom, skype. As long as you can use this app. I would say that, if possible, I would like to have extra equipment for me maybe microphone which make my voice much clearer and also external webcam.” - Respondent 6

Theme 2: Laptop problem

The theme of laptop problem was identified based from the transcription of the pre-service teachers answer. Although many pre-service teachers have enough equipment but they still encounter some problems of their laptop. Most of them were having some issues regarding the sound system and maintenance of the laptop. It can be proven by two of pre-service teachers answers below:

“Yes sure, I have laptop umm...speaker if needed like the application in my laptop like google meet, zoom, PowerPoint for the slides. I have enough equipment to teach online but the thing is like the laptop might you know... might get lag or something... so it's kind of uncomfortable to use it always.” - Respondent 3.

“I have laptop but my laptop is old version you know so I usually use hand phone to conduct class. But hand phone also very hard for me because it is too small and very limited to download any apps.” - Respondent 9.

Theme 3: Internet connection problem

The theme of internet connection problem was determined based from the transcription of the preservice teachers' responses. Most of the pre-service teachers faced difficulties in conducting online class because most of them did not have a strong internet connection. Although have enough resources to teach online, they still cannot conduct the online class without the Internet connection. It can be proven by two of pre-service teachers answers below:

“Okay for now yes, I think I have enough tools or equipment to teach online. I am good with the platforms used. I know how to share my screens. I know how to share my materials. I am able to do all the technical stuffs but the only problem faced was my network connection. So sometimes it can be a bit lagging, sometimes the internet is there so yeah... it interrupts my teaching sessions.” - Respondent 4.

“I do have enough tools. I have laptop, speaker but the thing is my internet connection always problem and it makes my students hard to join the class.” - Respondent 7.

“Tools I think I have everything but you know my line problem. I can’t control my line, sometimes it’s problem and sometimes it is good. Usually, it is problem when I have to teach online. Very rude you know...” - Respondent 8.

Table 11: Interview Question 6

Main Category	Themes & description
Manage students’ problem (equipment)	<u>Theme 1: Inform earlier</u>
Interview Question	TESL pre-service teacher have to inform students earlier about the classroom schedule.
6)	<u>Theme 2: Parents’ role</u>
	Parents play an important role to ensure that students present in online class.
	<u>Theme 3: Record the class</u>
	TESL pre-service teachers record the lesson.
	<u>Theme 4: Use WhatsApp platform</u>
	TESL pre-service teachers use another platform to share their notes.

Theme 2: Parents' role

The theme of parents' role was described based from the transcription of the pre-service teachers' responses. Three out of twelve pre-service teachers have mentioned that the parents play an important role in order to ensure that students join the class. It is parents also can help students to provide the equipment or tools such as laptop, and internet connection for online classes. It can be proven by three of pre-service teachers' responses below:

In my opinion, there's not much that we can actually do regarding the students' inadequate resources. I can only hope that their parents or guardians can provide sufficient resources for them to be able to attend. Other than that, I would try to give tasks that do not require a lot of Internet data usage because I understand that not many people can afford learning through online. - Respondent 2.

So, in this case, I think parents play a big role because like we can't really communicate with students alone, we can't really hope to you know for them to umm attend the online classes like every ... every single time we did in the class. But I think the teacher like need to communicate with the parents to like they can briefly tell the parents the schedule of the class. So that the parents can help them to prepare to attend the online class. - Respondent 3.

All my students have their own devices at home. My students do not have strong connection for joining the online classes. The internet connection they might have trouble, their Wi-Fi to cope this problem I would get their parents' phone number and I will discuss with them so they could actually like buy even prepare the internet plan at home- just for study purposes. - Respondent 6.

Theme 3: Record the class

However, for the theme of record the class was determined based from the transcription of the preservice teachers' answers. Most of the pre-service teachers would suggest alternative ways which is record the lesson to teach students who do not have enough equipment or tools at their own house. The students can watch the video regardless of time because the video does not have the limit time. It can be proven by several of pre-service teachers answers below:

Okay so I think for my students who have limited resources and equipment and cannot join or focus in my class. So, the first one I think what I can do is I can record the class and hopefully they will watch it if they cannot join the class because to be honest, I cannot force them to join the class if they said they had internet connection problem, right? So, I think maybe I can prepare fun activities during online class, so that they will be more interested to join the class and will feel miss out when they don't join the class. - Respondent 4.

All my students have their own devices at home. My students do not have strong connection for joining the online classes. The internet connection they might have trouble, their Wi-Fi to cope this problem I would get their parents' phone number and I will discuss with them so they could actually like buy even prepare the internet plan at home- just for study purposes – Respondent 6.

Theme 4: Use WhatsApp platform

The theme of use WhatsApp platform was identified based from the several pre-service teacher's transcriptions in the interview questions. Most of them suggest using this platform to teach because

they believe that every student nowadays has this kind of platform in their own gadgets. They also mentioned some benefits of the platforms as it is user friendly to every student and it is very easy to use. It can be proven by two of pre-service teachers answers below:

I think I will do like my lecturer did to us such as uploading the recording and notes at one platform such as for high-school students I think WhatsApp is the right platforms. So, I will upload it on WhatsApp. - Respondent 10

I use WhatsApp group and voice note to them but if there some of them couldn't download it, I cannot do- help them anymore because I also faced difficulties in teaching. - Respondent 9.

One word, WhatsApp. Majority of Malaysian uses this app to communicate daily in their life. As we are unable to have physical class, I would share all my notes to my students via WhatsApp message and the method that I am able to apply in my notes is Mind Mapping as this will ease my students not just to understand better but they will be able to have a clearer vision of what I am trying to convey in the lesson. - Respondent 5.

CONCLUSION

To conclude this study, a majority number of TESL pre-service teachers were not fully prepared to conduct online classes and they also express that they face severe challenges while preparing and conducting online classes. Based on the results of this study, the following recommendations are identified a new course or subject should be introduced in the teacher training programme to expose TESL pre-service teachers to the online teaching pedagogies, online teaching methods and approaches and how to manage online classrooms and student behaviour during online classes. Introduce an e-mentor system to offer guidance from expert to TESL pre-service teachers to further help them develop their teaching skills for online teaching classes. For future research purposes, a larger sample group could be used in order to get a more define and broader data.

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