Glimpses of Teaching in the New Normal: Changes, Challenges, and Chances

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Abstract. The current context on virtual education has provided a plethora of studies investigating educational institutions' response strategies to remote and online learning formats. However, to provide a much-grounded description of the realities in the field, this study explored the role of teachers in the virtual learning environment through their narratives reflective of their experiences. Furthermore, it employed a qualitative narrative and descriptive research method anchored on the tenets of Husserlian descriptive phenomenology. Six higher education professors from different colleges and universities in Central Visayas, Philippines served as the participants of the study. Data were collected from in-depth interviews done virtually via Zoom. Based on participant narratives, the following emerged as themes: changes, challenges, and chances, respectively, in all the teaching-learning phases, from preparation and implementation to assessment. These *changes*, *challenges*, and *chances* shared by the participants have shed light on teaching being a multifaceted profession, putting emphasis on teachers as innovators of change. Thus, it is recommended that colleges and universities should establish an institutional based framework for emergency remote teaching. The framework should highlight policies on virtual education, upscale and upskill teachers, address learning losses, and promote strategies to build resilience in students and teachers.

Keywords: glimpses of teaching; teacher experiences; teacher roles; virtual learning environment; virtual teaching

1. Introduction

The unprecedented shift made by educational institutions from face-to-face instructional delivery to virtual teaching and technology-enhanced learning has left school administrators, faculty, parents, and students in a quandary as to how this will impact the worldwide educational arena. The current context has caused

the frantic and abrupt launching of policy initiatives since schools have been closed and people instructed to stay at home. Higher education institutions (HEIs) in the Philippines have implemented proactive measures to ensure that learning still takes place despite the situation.

When COVID-19 resulted in the closure of schools worldwide, the education sector made a great leap from face-to-face teaching and learning to remote teaching and digital learning. The changes brought by the pandemic have been observed not only in the use of technology in education but also in pedagogical aspects. Academic institutions have been compelled to respond to the challenges by implementing appropriate and timely restructuring to continue to provide education and sustain the continuation of student academic progress (Amir et al., 2020). There are four memorandum orders (MOs) for HEIs in the Philippines related to the current situation, one of which is MO no. 4, series of 2020. MO no. 4 contains guidelines on the implementation of flexible learning and teaching options, approaches, strategies, systems, pedagogies, and modalities in higher education programs by all private and public Philippine HEIs (Republic of the Philippines. Commission on Higher Education [CHED], 2020). The government has initiated certain measures for alternative teaching and learning to still take place. For instance, the Commission on Higher Education (Republic of the Philippines. CHED, 2020) through CHED MO no. 4, series 2020 stipulated the guidelines on the implementation of flexible learning. It calls for HEIs to explore various innovative learning modalities that are customized, flexible, and responsive to the different needs and current situation of the learners.

Online learning includes synchronous sessions, where lectures are delivered in real time virtually. There are also asynchronous sessions, which may include but are not limited to pre-recorded video lectures, tasks for skills reinforcement, and other assessments which are time independent (Oztok et al., 2013, in Joaquin et al., 2020). In some schools, students are categorized based on the availability of devices and internet access. Students are given the opporunity to choose their mode of learning or mode of instructional delivery used the teachers. Students may opt for either solely online or offline or where modules are used. However, catering to all the three groups may be challenging for teachers with regard to conducting synchronous classes, designing asynchronous activities, and creating the module.

During the pandemic, teachers resorted to virtual teaching almost immediately. Virtual teaching is teaching that happens in a virtual classroom, which refers to an online learning environment, with the use of technological tools such as computers, laptops, tablets, cellphones, and the internet. There is one common denominator which links the terms (online learning, open learning, web-based learning, computer-mediated learning, blended learning, m-learning), and that is the use of a computer or electronic device and being able to connect via the internet. This provides opportunity to continue learning despite the absence of a physical classroom and synchronized time (Cojocariu et al., 2014, in Dhawan, 2020). Online learning is defined as learning encounters in both synchronous and asynchronous environments utilizing the internet with mobile phones, laptops,

etc. (Singh & Thurman, 2019). This provides students opportunities to learn and interact with their teachers anywhere and anytime. Virtual teaching has become a necessity and not an option for most schools, especially in higher education institutions in the country.

The abrupt change to deliver instruction online has compelled everyone in the academic environment, including teachers and students, to welcome and adjust to the virtual academic endeavors. Teachers have had to, almost overnight, become designers of digital tools and writers of books/modules, aspects with which they have limited to no experience at all. Although faculty have undergone technology trainings and have had access to a plethora of online resources and digital tools, no one was prepared for the sudden new experiences of online education and challenges related to technology.

Both teachers and students have reported challenges in virtual teaching. The availability of appropriate tools as well as strong internet connectivity is just one. Online teaching and learning require teachers to have certain technological, pedagogical, and content knowledge (TPACK) when designing their lessons incorporating varied technologies. Teachers and students also must reflect on their capacity of navigating through various digital tools. Usually in a technology workshop, teachers are introduced to new tools and are trained on how to use these tools. However, teachers prefer using readily available materials online mainly to save time. Considering the new shift from the physical classroom to online teaching, teachers must go beyond the task of teaching to designing materials and technology to accomplish the teaching objectives (Koehler et al., 2004). Teachers most especially are prompted to reimagine education and find ways to humanize the learning process by focusing on students' needs first to the best extent possible (Dhawan, 2020).

Moreover, the abrupt transitioning of courses from the traditional physical class to a virtual one has also added to teachers' stress and workload. The preparation that is entailed for teachers to write the modules to cater to those who have limitations in terms of gadgets and internet connectivity is also overwhelming. Added to that is their personal time allotted for practice in navigating the different digital tools and learning how to design activities using the different software. Teachers are also managing their online classrooms and conducting synchronous classes. The top issues expressed by teachers concerning virtual classes include access to the appropriate tools required for learning, exposure and training aside from the lack of instructional materials, and lack of exposure to online curricula (Navarosa & Fernando, 2020). These issues are also affected by the problems and concerns brought about by the pandemic and teachers being detained at home.

However, despite this, the study of Miyagawa and Perdue (2020) revealed that many instructors found teaching in the new normal not just challenging but also rewarding since the situation has made them become more creative. It has also made them evaluate the curricula and reflect on what is essential. In addition, they have been able to explore and challenge their own capabilities in using varied digital tools. This has made teachers realize that they are not mere users of

technology but also designers this time (Koehler et al., 2004). In HEIs, teachers are encouraged to write up research, develop utility models, and be frontliners of innovation. With the current situation, teachers not only learn significantly how to use existing hardware and software in creative, novel, and situation-specific ways; they also learn to develop their own materials to accomplish their teaching goals. Considering the heavy task to balance teaching, research, and other obligations, designing materials and other tasks related to the novel environment of online teaching has added to the stress and workload of faculty (Joaquin et al., 2020).

It is in this context that we would like to get a glimpse through teachers' narratives of their transition from face-to-face teaching to virtual teaching, and how this scenario has changed their role as technology users and creators in the new teaching environment. Teachers' pedagogical role has also been challenged as they are compelled to reflect on the general nature of education. Thus, this study aimed to explore the role of teachers in HEIs in the current context. It further sought to provide a clearer picture of teacher experiences as they embrace their role in the new normal. It is hoped that learning institutions would be able to craft and plan policies to support the emerging roles of teachers in the virtual learning environment.

2. Domain of Inquiry
This study takes glimpses of the role of teachers in the virtual learning environment through their narratives reflective of their experiences as they embrace their role in the new normal.

3. Research Method
This study employed the qualitative narrative and descriptive research method. The goal was to comprehensively describe and summarize the narratives of the participating teachers on their experiences in the virtual learning environment. The method is anchored on the tenets of Husserlian descriptive phenomenology, whose philosophical underpinning is that of the human lived experience. The qualitative descriptive method drew emphasis from naturalistic inquiry, which elicits participants' experiences in their natural state (Lambert & Lambert, 2012). The varied perspectives were considered in studying participant narratives. Following the principles of data saturation, six higher education professors from different state universities and local colleges in region 7, Central Visayas were selected as research participants.

In-depth interviews were conducted virtually using open-ended exploratory and interpretive questions to facilitate the sharing of experiences on the phenomenon being studied. Trough ethical practice, their identities were protected using the principle of anonymity. The study was also subjected under the scrutiny of the Research Ethics Board of the Cebu Normal University, Cebu City, Philippines. The collected data were transcribed and analyzed using thematic steps developed by Colaizzi (1978), which is consistent with Husserl's descriptive phenomenology.

4. Results and Discussion

After participant interviews had been conducted, their interviews were transcribed and the data analyzed and clustered into themes. The following emerged as themes: *changes*, *challenges,* and *chances,* respectively, in all levels of teaching and learning, from preparation and implementation to assessment.

4.1 Theme 1: Changes

Change means to undergo transformation, to substitute or make a shift from one to another (Merriam-Webster, n.d.). In order to keep up with the demands of the abrupt shift from face-to-face classes to virtual teaching, it is imperative to make changes to the usual way of preparing, delivering, and assessing students' learning.

4.1.1 Preparation

The preparation of instruction requires modifications to syllabi, trainings for technology use, and mind-setting for the new normal. Teachers need all the support in transitioning teaching from the physical to the virtual learning environment (Griffin, 2020).

The interviews revealed that the participants were provided with avenues for upskilling, such as webinars, workshops, and trainings, to prepare them for the online platform environment. Regarding this, participants commented:

> *"We had a lot of meetings and webinars. Our university organized seminars because we are facing a different kind of setup now with our education."* (P5)

> *"We were taught how to use the different applications, especially that we have veteran teachers. We were taught how to navigate these applications and other tools in teaching using technology. … The administrators conducted a college-wide webinar on module making and design, like how to craft interactive modules, etc."* (P3)

Participants also mentioned that the preparation of the faculty has changed with the time required being doubled to include setting up of the virtual classroom.

> *"We had revisions done for our syllabus to enhance and fit for the virtual classroom setup. We need to change some activities that will not be applicable anymore. … Time really is not enough for the preparation of the opening for the new semester."* (P5)

> *"There are many things to be done, yet so little time."* (P2)

> *"While preparing the printed modules, we also prepare for the virtual classrooms. We are not ready and time was running fast."* (P1)

Participants have had to modify their ways of preparing for instruction since it is a key element of success and there has been a great change in the teaching-learning landscape.

4.1.2 Implementation

Participants acknowledged the need to tailor their usual teaching classroom practices to suit the current need for distance learning. They highlighted three major changes when it comes to the implementation of virtual teaching. These are changes in teachers' roles, strategies, and use of technology.

The participants claimed that they now perform other roles due to the learning shift from a public space (classroom) to a personal space (online). Teachers are no longer mere conduits of knowledge, but contributors to it. Other than being a facilitator, guide, mentor, and guidance counsellor, they are also designers, content creators, and content coaches. Participants said that:

> *"It's something beyond teaching, because you will be like a creator; aside from being a facilitator, you will be something more beyond resourceful."* (P5)

> *"I'm not just a consumer but a creator. I study some applications; I go over it and then I try to see how it works. And then I do trial and error before I introduce it to my students. And I also asked my colleagues to try the applications if it works. I learned so many things from that since I just don't use but I also create something, and it is a nice experience and fulfilment on my part."* (P3)

> *"It's different right now that I am really the one creating the Google Classroom, navigating it; I post, I assign, I develop the topics, etc., etc."* (P4)

Aside from changes in the teacher's role are changes in teaching strategies. With online teaching, the usual lecture method may not be very appealing to students anymore. Research has shown that for student satisfaction and retention, interaction between students and teachers and among students is critically important both for face-to-face and virtual learning environments (King & Doerfert, 1996, in Lewis & Abdul-Hamid, 2006). Teachers are prompted to use more creative ways of engagement and receptivity. Concerning this, participants shared:

> *"I make use of Canva in my presentations since PowerPoint presentation sometimes may appear boring for them. Sometimes reading would take time, so I do audio reading or the audio recording, and then they also do the same. Students also do video character portrayals so that they can better appreciate the literary piece."* (P1)

> *"I do video recordings and demonstrations aside from the live classes online."* (P3)

> *"I use songs as motivation, eBooks, and YouTube videos to supplement my discussion."* (P4)

These participants also supplement their synchronous classes with informal consultations using other online platforms that students can easily access. Social media plays an important role, especially in the new normal. In this digital age, it is impossible to deny the impact of social media (Mananay, 2018), as echoed by some participants:

"I want to interact with my students more, but the time in synchronous class is limited. So, what we did is that students will just chat about their questions and concerns after our synchronous class, and I will answer them one by one." (P1)

"Aside from the LMS [learning management system], I also do interactions with my students in (Facebook) Messenger." (P2, P5)

"I provide them with pre-recorded materials and whatever supplementary materials are provided for those in print; I also upload them in Messenger and Google Classroom." (P4)

Participants reinforced their teaching by using technology. All participants claimed that there is really a big change in how they regard and integrate technology before and after the transition to online learning. Most of them were not so familiar with the use of digital tools before the pandemic. The current setup has "forced" them to explore these tools and to learn how to navigate them.

"During pre-pandemic, my self-evaluation is that I was just a consumer of technology and materials. So, pre-pandemic, I did not really integrate much technology, so I regret it that I did not use technology more when we had face-to-face classes." (P3)

"I learned how to apply add-ons in Google Docs. I use Adobe Spark aside from Canva; I produce posters, banners for the Google Classroom. I use PowerPoint to produce an mpeg video form. I adopt some content, some I create. I get from the internet, I develop, I edit, I read the content." (P4)

"I am both the consumer and the creator of technology. During the pre-pandemic, I was expected as a teacher to make use of technology. But now in the pandemic, I have observed that not only me but most teachers have optimized the use of that technology." (P6)

Educators have had to change from being facilitators of learning to innovators (Saxena, 2020). With the current changes in education, teachers are expected to meet not only the academic needs of students but also their social and emotional needs (Bacus & Alda, 2022). Teachers have to be versatile in implementing significant strategies and classroom practices and confront the structural changes in the learning environments. Moreover, to attain effective and successful lesson delivery, teachers must be able to actualize and apply technology with content and relevant pedagogy (Izhar et al., 2021). The TPACK model highlights the importance of this knowledge and skills among teachers – where teachers must create more engaging, relevant, and enduring teaching-learning experiences. Participant 6 even specifically mentioned that:

"The TPACK has been materialized. It appeared to some that it was something difficult to do, but with the pandemic, we are left with no choice but to optimize the use of technology, and I can say that it's really helpful."

With a lot of changes going on, teachers are expected to revisit and recalibrate teaching practices and innovate to address the diversity and current needs of students.

4.1.3 Assessment
Participants became more flexible in the different aspects of the teaching-learning process and embraced the importance of gradual and consistent integration of technology in education regardless of the situation. Some willingly shared:

> *"… feedbacking happens in Messenger, private conversations between me and my students."* (P4)

> *"Formative assessments are uploaded ahead of time for the students to read and then I give them time to answer. … I upload the midterm, or tests, 15 mins before the time and then they can take it, 1 hour."* (P5)

Different forms of assessment with approved content, including product-based assessment, are employed to address differentiated learning. Participant 1 shared:

> *"Aside from my activity sheets, we have what we call extension of learning. Usually, there is a performance task, which is a differentiated situation analysis based on their program. We don't usually give a summative test like multiple choice or a paper and pencil test or supply type. What we give is a situation analysis for the major exam.*

According to participants, the teacher has become a lover of technology, which comes in handy in terms of giving assessment to the students. Some participants shared their experiences in the use of technology to deliver assessment.

> *"… with technology, I can give formative and summative assessments aside from the Google Class."* (P2)

> *"For summative assessment, I usually let them access QuizStar.com. It's an online quiz where my students register. That is my formative assessment."* (P4)

Student are assessed holistically through an array of varied assessments of learning. This is to ensure the authenticity, validity, and reliability of the answers of the students. Assessment comes in both authentic and non-authentic forms and is differentiated for the two learning modalities. Participant 1 shared their experience as follows:

> *"Aside from attendance, sa module itself nakasudnadidto ang iyahang [there is also the inclusion of the students' written output]. … So, the projects … is the extension of learning."*

Besides attendance of the module itself, the module contains the written outputs and projects. The projects serve as an extension of learning, as explained by Participant 3:

> *"So, this is a combination of, like, a video that I will show to them and then I have guide questions, maybe five of them. Then there are also multiple choice and I also ask for a brief explanation for each question, maybe two questions."*

The process of change is painful. In addition to the changes made by the participants in their roles during virtual teaching, they also encountered challenges during the course of the changes.

4.2 Theme 2: Challenges
With all the changes happening during the transition to online learning, challenges and anxieties beset teachers in terms of addressing their teaching role in the new normal. In this study, challenges refer to the difficulties encountered by teachers in the delivery of lessons and classes during the pandemic. Teachers encountered varied challenges, from preparation of instruction to implementation and assessment. Education programs rarely prepare teachers for a virtual teaching environment (Archambault, 2011).

4.2.1 Preparation
Not all participants were very adept at the online setup and so they felt it a burden to prepare their virtual classrooms and conduct the classes. They felt they were not ready for this setup.

> *"Using the technology is really a challenge on my part, especially since I am not very young like the other modern teachers."* (P5)

> *"When it comes to technology, I am an immigrant, I am not native. … No, it's not easy. We are not ready, to be honest."* (P1)

Teachers need to ensure that materials and activities are engaging, and doing this on the online platform is challenging since there are no benchmarking experiences. Everything is new and always in the experimental stage. The fastest growing phenomenon in the use of technology in education is online learning (West et al., 2012). Thus, teachers are challenged regarding the kind of activities that will engage students and to ensure that learning occurs.

4.2.2 Implementation
As teachers assume varied roles such as facilitator, guide, mentor, counsellor, friend, and confidante, they are also expected to realign teaching practices vis-à-vis online learning platforms. Many teachers have reported that they have limited experience in online teaching, and this causes the lack of online teaching skills among them (Izhar et al., 2021). Thus, they have difficulty not just in preparing the materials but also in creating suitable teaching methods for students, especially during synchronous classes. Regarding this, participants shared:

> *"I'm not used to virtual classes and the interaction is minimal. I got used to hearing them one by one, so I did that at first. But it was very time-consuming, especially in a one-hour synchronous class."* (P1)

> *"But then, during the virtual session, it was really difficult at the very start; it's a struggle. Students don't want to talk, so I have to find activities that would make them talk. They are sometimes passive and distracted by household chores"* (P2)

> *"There are challenges, yes, especially the internet connection. And when you have that very high momentum when you discuss and then suddenly*

the computer or the internet stops working and students have left the meeting. So, the challenge is you cannot make sure if students are learning." (P4)

"It's something beyond teaching, because you will be like a creator; aside from being a facilitator, you will be something more, beyond resourceful. The patience that you need to have, it's because there are internet issues." (P5)

"So, one is, isolation in this time is a challenge, because there is no physical presence. You know, in real work, it's different when you face on-screen, so we can feel the person in that sense. You know the energy, there is more life when we are in person. Sometimes we feel lonely. I can maximize the interaction, but the energy level, the power, the liveliness is still different." (P6)

4.2.3 Assessment
During the pandemic, there is no other option for continuing education, especially higher education, besides online learning (Mahyoob, 2020). To ensure continuity and delivery of academic services, universities across the Philippines embraced innovative educational delivery means, such as distance education, modular remote learning, blended education, online teaching, and/or mobile learning (Rotas & Cahapay, 2020).

The greatest challenge encountered by the participants in conducting online classes when it comes to assessment was the authenticity, validity, and reliability of the answers given by the students. Guangul et al. (2020) identified the main challenges in remote assessment as academic dishonesty, infrastructure, coverage of learning outcomes, and commitment of students to submit assessments.

Some of the participants expressed concern over dishonesty and cheating during exams, be it synchronous or asynchronous. The following utterance proves such claim:
> *"But what I have noticed with my students when it comes to essays or brief explanation, it seems that they really copy answers from each other."* (P2)

Additionally, assessment results do not give teachers the assurance that learning has taken place. Even if the teacher makes an effort to measure higher order critical thinking and maximize the validity of student answers, still the students' output does not guarantee learning. Participants shared the following:
> *"I'm not very satisfied … they are really not that responsive. … I would not say that I'm using the right nets [assessments]."* (P4)

> *"Most serious – the formative assessment from time to time to make sure that they really learned. … Like making sure that students really have learned, that's really a big challenge in assessment."* (P3)

Another challenge was the type of learning management system used and unstable internet connection. Participants struggled to get connected:

"Yes, and the students really had difficulty in accessing the online platforms." (P1)

"As to the challenges, especially online is the challenge of connectivity, both for my students and me." (P6)

Students' prompt and appropriate responses to the given tasks and expectations were not satisfying. Participant 3 shared regarding this: "*There were instances where students don't attach anything to the course material.*"

The assessment process requires feedback. Student achievement is also dependent upon teachers' feedbacking (Hattie, 1999). One of the main objectives of feedback is for students to develop their capability to monitor, evaluate, and regulate their own learning (Nicol, 2010). Assessment and feedbacking are limited and untimely.

According to Nicol (2010), feedback needs to be constructive, timely, and meaningful in order to benefit student learning. This is challenging to attain, especially in this time of the pandemic where people are struggling to survive and cope in the new normal. In addition to changes and challenges, participants also experienced chances.

4.3 Theme 3: Chances
With change comes challenges, and between all these teachers are trying to survive with all educational and psychological demands. As such, participants also acknowledged the opportunities or chances that surfaced amidst the challenges.

4.3.1 Preparation
Left with no choice, teachers consult and benchmark with colleagues, family, and other stakeholders. There is a need for teachers to collaborate, as well as to be resourceful and creative. Teachers have become team players in these trying times as they work closely together with their professional learning community.

Participants shared that they have become resourceful in finding ways to cope with the demands and to do something to mitigate stress with the hope of producing positive outcomes. They uttered:

"We really have to deliver what needs to be delivered. We have to push and carry on." (P3)

"I had to optimize the available resources; you just had to be resourceful in this time of pandemic even in the teaching and learning." (P6)

"I have to ask my husband who is more knowledgeable and even my son to help me in my preparation of the Google Classroom. And also my other co-teachers in the department; they are very willing to help as well. And for this I am very thankful." (P5)

Participants' creativity and problem-solving skills developed a lot. With everyone's support and cooperation, participants concerted all efforts in the

creation of self-learning modules and activities for online classes. In this regard, they said:

> *"I learned how to become a technician, fixing problems."* (P3)

> *"Teachers are now focused to extract and create content. Before and during the pre-pandemic, I just assigned topics for reporting, but now I reflect on how else to present the lesson creatively."* (P4)

> *"My role as a teacher has improved. But technically and primarily as a facilitator of learning, it has to stay. But the approaches, the attack, attached to the learning process has improved."* (P6)

4.3.2 Implementation
Participants narrated embracing the changes and accepting that they have to adjust their practices, as the current setup has become the new normal.

> *"There is so much collaboration, then we looked for resources. We asked for help. The younger generation teachers were also challenged to assist other faculty members who have difficulty, especially in technology."* (P3)

> *"My students are very creative and hardworking. And sometimes they go beyond my expectations. I partner and collaborate with my students. I prefer to collaborate with my students, because I have really proven that they are more advanced compared to me when it comes to technology."* (P6)

From this perspective, participants saw the opportunities that come with their struggles in navigating the different tools online. Instead of concentrating on the problem, they tried to find ways to do something about the problem. As the time for synchronous classes is limited, they extended their help and assistance to their students through informal consultations and chats. Where students complained about their internet connection and "choppy" discussions, participants would upload pre-recorded and recorded live lectures for their students. These recorded lectures allow students to watch and listen to the lectures at any time. Lastly, participants mentioned that during the second year of implementation of distance learning, they embraced a positive mindset and devised strategies that would make things better for them and their students. Looking forward to things getting better has also helped them develop a more positive attitude towards the current situation.

> *"And the good thing is that students although you provide applications that they can use, will also try their best to look for another application which is somehow better than what you've introduced. So, it challenges me more to do better as well and learn more."* (P3)

> *"I decided to take a risk in trusting technology. I took it as a learning. And together with my students, we try to learn how to do things."* (P4)

> *"As long as I can see the student being able to learn; as long as I can see the student's thirst to learn, I am ready to take the challenge. I just look at it as if I just consider myself as if I am a fresh graduate and trying to cope with the new environment. … I guess my role in the new setup is that – I*

became more alive. I become more oriented with technology and apply it
in all my lessons. I get amazed at how technology works. Every day is
learning with technology for me." (P1)

Participants were indeed resilient and robust in taking the challenges head-on, and were also able to transform these challenges into opportunities for learning, collaboration, and improvement.

4.3.3 Assessment
Considering that the authenticity and validity of the answers of the students was the greatest challenge for participants, they created assessments with different dynamics. Participants determined different ways and means in order to ensure the validity of the answers of the students and, if not, to eliminate, or at least minimize, the occurrence of cheating.

"Summative tests are usually done non-authentically. I follow the more
structured and formal way, but the formative is more authentic." (P6)

"That is why I combine varied test types." (P2)

Participants would make sure that the design and content of the assessment are relevant to the course and discipline of the students.

"… if my students are coming from the Education Department, I will use
board exam questions. But when I'm teaching students from other degree
programs, I also use different test types." (P1)

Participants saw the need to embrace technology as aids in assessment. In so doing, they have become experts and masters of these technological applications.

"It is already now thanks to the Quillbot app. So, in checking the output
online, the teacher is more on reading [assessing and clarifying] the idea."
(P1)

"… with technology, I can give formative and summative assessments.
Aside from the G Class that I am using, there are also websites they will
access. What is good in the QuizStar is that it can give the results right
away." (P2)

Participants indicated that the roles played by the teacher in terms of assessment in case of dishonesty during assessment are that of a guidance counsellor, judge, and jury. The teacher also exerts an effort to correct the acts of the student/s for the purpose of realization, remorse, and reformation, as indicated by participants:

"But what I did is that I asked the student to come to school to talk with
me about what happened, so I need to know the scenario. Still, the
guidance counselling is a part of it." (P1)

Participants acknowledged that there are points to improve and were willing to act on them. One participant observed proper time management and tried her utmost in order to address the issue of meeting deadlines. This is what she said:

"But I try my best so that I can measure … evaluate the performance of
my students. … I would try to reach out to them and ask them what made
it difficult. I can find a solution … We try to reconsider as well if
everything." (P4)

Even with the difficulties, students still manage to submit their assessments on time. Participant 2 shared: *"They can submit right away due to the time limit, especially in the formative … the same with the summative."*

Participants shared that there is a lot of room for improvement when it comes to assessments. They embraced the importance of gradual and consistent integration of technology in education regardless of the situation. Participant 3 shared:

> *"Teachers made a tutorial video on what students will do in case they encounter problems."* (P3)

Participant 5 rated their overall experience in terms of assessment of learning:

> *"I am giving it an 8 for the tool, because I still need to find resources/sources, then my assessment will be very fitting. … In terms of competencies, I rate myself 7 in a virtual setup, although it is very difficult to compare, since face-to-face is more tangible than virtual. Unlike in the classroom, we see them eye to eye."*

In the final part of the interview, participants were asked about their satisfaction in terms of the right kinds of assessment tools used and the right competencies that they were able to measure. They shared:

> *"Yes, I am quite satisfied with the results, even with the limitations of online tools for assessment."* (P1)

> *"I can claim that I have succeeded very satisfactorily. The proofs of that claim are the immediate feedback, the performance of the students, the evaluation of the students."* (P6)

> *"… maybe somehow, I did it well, because I can see that my students learned something and that they were able to elicit the skill that I want them to see, that I wanted to see from them after the term … perhaps not really perfect, but I just tried my best."* (P3)

With the proper guidance and mentoring, participants tried their best so that no student would be left behind. Teachers are thus reinventing themselves and their occupation to better serve schools and students.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

In the parlance of teaching and learning in the new normal, the role of teachers has been greatly emphasized to be more that of innovators of change. The changes and challenges prompted by the virtual learning environment shed light on teaching being a multifaceted profession. Teachers are not only expected to be experts in curriculum and pedagogy. They are also expected to meet the social and emotional needs of a diverse learner population, implement ever-evolving pedagogical practices, deal with major structural changes in the new learning environments, and promote digital collaboration. In terms of technology use, teachers have become content creators and designers with the emergence of the online learning space.

This research is based only on qualitative research methods and not on statistical results. Additional research on this topic may support the key findings of the

study on the emerging themes of *changes*, *challenges,* and *chances*, respectively, on the role of teachers in a virtual learning environment. We thus recommend that local colleges and state universities encourage research on this topic and establish institutional based frameworks for emergency remote teaching environments. In addition, we recommend that local colleges and state universities create policy on how to conduct virtual education encompassing preparation, implementation, and assessment; and continuously upscale and upskill teachers.

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