

Face to Face Lessons During the Endemic Stage of Covid-19: ESL Teachers' Perspectives

Siti Noramira Razali, Segar A/L Sadhasivam, Ayesha Nisha
Binti Nawsad Ali, Azlina Abdul Aziz

Faculty of Education, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, 43600 UKM, Bangi, Selangor,
Malaysia

Email: p119475@siswa.ukm.edu.my, p114130@siswa.ukm.edu.my,
p113093@siswa.ukm.edu.my, azlina1@ukm.edu.my

DOI Link: <http://dx.doi.org/10.6007/IJARPED/v14-i3/26526>

Published Online: 29 September 2025

Abstract

This study seeks to explore the perspectives of English teachers on teaching and learning during the endemic stage of COVID-19. After almost two years of conducting online classes, teachers and students are now allowed to be at school. The transition has caused divided opinions among teachers on their perceptions of teaching during this stage. In addition to the perceptions, especially the advantages of moving instruction from online to conventional teaching, there are also challenges that the teachers need to face due to this transition. With the aim of better understanding of their perspectives, researchers have conducted a study through the use of the oral history method in the hope to get more information about this issue. Using a qualitative inquiry as the research design for this study, three English teachers from three different secondary schools in Malaysia have been interviewed as the respondents. The researchers used a convenience sampling technique in choosing the respondents for this research. The instrument of this research was a semi-structured interview. The findings of the research revealed the advantages, challenges, and adaptive teaching and classroom strategies that the teachers are currently using in teaching their students during this endemic stage. Future research can explore the perceptions of teaching and learning during the endemic stage of teachers from different backgrounds and experiences.

Keywords: Teachers' Perception, Endemic Stage, Covid-19, Face-To-Face Teaching, Online Teaching, Advantages, Challenges

Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a profound impact on the global learning environment, leading to the closure of nearly 1.5 billion learning institutions worldwide and disrupting students' access to the usual educational pattern (United Nations 2020; World Health Organization [WHO] 2020). In Malaysia, the Prime Minister announced a stay-home order as part of the Movement Control Order (MCO), which lasted for several months and required citizens to adapt to new norms in economic, educational, and social spheres.

To curb the spread of the virus, the Director-General of Health, Datuk Dr. Hisham bin Abdullah, introduced new practices such as one-meter social distancing, avoiding crowded spaces, and the 3W approach (wash, wear, and warn). These measures significantly affected the education sector, where the enforcement of the MCO on March 18, 2020, shifted approximately 1.8 million public secondary school students and nearly 150,000 teachers from face-to-face classroom interactions to online learning through various digital platforms (Ministry of Education Malaysia 2020).

This sudden transition brought both opportunities and challenges. On one hand, pupils benefited from technological advancements that allowed them to communicate with teachers beyond school hours and to independently research information from diverse sources, fostering versatility and adaptability. On the other hand, many students lost the freedom to learn at their own pace, while others were left behind due to illness or limited access to online education. Moreover, the abrupt implementation of online teaching and learning revealed gaps in preparedness, as neither educators nor learners had sufficient training or exposure to digital pedagogy. Similar findings have been reported in Malaysia, where English language teachers in Sabah demonstrated only moderate readiness for e-learning during school suspension (Sulaiman & Ariffin 2022).

As the pandemic situation eased, schools gradually resumed physical classes. However, the rapid shift between online and offline teaching modes raised questions about the readiness of both teachers and students to engage in effective and sustainable learning. International studies have begun to examine teachers' behavioural intention to continue online teaching post-pandemic (Fu et al. 2023) and the impact of pandemic-driven teaching innovations on student learning (Chen & Chou 2022). Yet, limited attention has been given to teachers' perspectives on face-to-face instruction during the endemic stage of COVID-19, particularly in the Malaysian context.

Unlike most existing studies that primarily examine students' experiences of online learning during the pandemic, this paper focuses on teachers' perspectives of face-to-face instruction in the endemic stage. This approach highlights the overlooked challenges and opportunities faced by educators during the abrupt transition between online and offline modes of learning. The findings are expected to contribute to the social science field by deepening understanding of teacher readiness, informing future crisis-responsive education policies, and strengthening strategies for effective teaching and learning in post-pandemic contexts.

Background of Study

The unprecedented situation of Covid - 19 pandemic has brought forward several severe impacts on people all around the world (Suhaimi & Rohaziah 2020). UNESCO claims that more than 50% of the student population around the world has been affected by the school closure due to Covid - 19 Pandemic (Soon 2020). Malaysia was not exceptional in experiencing the Covid-19 pandemic. As any government would do, the Malaysian overnment has taken measures to contain Covid - 19 by implementing a movement control order (MCO) which has also affected the education system.

The teaching and learning process had to take place despite Covid - 19 pandemic. Hence, electronic learning (also known as e-learning) or generally called online learning took over the classroom teaching and learning practices. Every education institution including preschools, primary schools, and secondary schools have been closed temporarily (Samsuri et al. 2020). However, the announcement of endemic has again urged the teachers and pupils to embrace the physical learning environment all over again while pupils were still in the process of accepting and adapting the online learning system. It may seem like the teachers and pupils may have no issues in immediately tolerating the transition as physical education was once a familiar way of education for all.

Nevertheless, the reality seems to be otherwise as the educators and learners had to once again unlearn and relearn their learning style that they are yet to be familiar with along the needs of implementing CEFR in English Language teaching.

The Covid-19 Pandemic has indubitably impacted the teaching and learning capacity among the teachers and pupils (Nurul Ashikin Izhar, Yahya & Na 2021). It began to hit Malaysia significantly in the year of 2020, where Malaysians faced their first lockdown experience due to this global pandemic. At the initial stage, the educators and the pupils were rather lost and even online sessions were not officially conducted among the pupils for almost two months until some teachers took their own initiative to conduct online sessions beyond the instructions from school (Nurul Ashikin Izhar, Yahya & Na 2021). When teachers were officially instructed to start conducting online classes upon the provision of a set time table, both teachers and students were first busy learning on how to handle various user-friendly online tools for the convenience of the teaching and the learning process (Nurhaiza Nordin 2020). By the time teachers and pupils could familiarize themselves with the transition of physical lessons to online lessons, there comes the endemic phase where everyone is back to face to face lessons and had the challenge to adapt into the old way all over again.

Problem Statement

Despite all the efforts by both the government and the public, there is the question of whether both teachers and students can tolerate the pressure of transitioning from traditional to online classes and back to the traditional way again. Both teachers and students had to experience a sudden transition when the pandemic period was first announced two years ago (Ramayah & Kumar 2020). There were so many issues and complaints not only from the students but also from the parents on the effectiveness of online teaching during that time. As mentioned by König, Jäger-Biela, and Glutsch (2020) teachers have to face the consequences of teaching through online platforms despite having difficulty adapting to the sudden changes. They were forced to master technology usage and integrate the new way of teaching using online platforms to convey the lessons to their students (Klien 2021). Although the majority of the teachers found learning technology was a challenge for them, they were still willing to learn and integrate technology in their class to ensure the learning of their students can still go on.

However, after getting a grip on online teaching, Malaysian teachers are now required to return to the conventional way of teaching which is face-to-face classes. Not only that, but teachers are also now tasked with ensuring students' enrolment and attendance. Teachers need to conduct their lessons in class and at the same time, they need to take precautions to

prevent the spread of Covid-19 during this post-pandemic era in class. Therefore, some parents may not allow their children to return to school due to this reason (Todd 2021). Thus, despite the transition to normal teaching, teachers still need to face some challenges in teaching the students at school. Apart from that, teachers must face the situation of students being inactive and passive in class due to the effect of having an online class for almost two years where their interactions were quite limited during that time. Thus, this paper aims to explore the challenges that the teachers need to face during the teaching and learning in the endemic stage. Besides, the researchers also intend to find out the advantages and strategies used by teachers during this period.

Research Objectives

This study was carried out with the following objectives:

- 1) To explore the advantages of physical classes during the endemic stage in comparison to online classes.
- 2) To investigate the challenges faced by English teachers in terms of designing classroom activities, maintaining students' attendance and participation during the endemic stage.
- 3) To find out the adaptive teaching and classroom strategies used by English teachers to encourage active participation during the endemic stage.

Research Questions

The research questions that guided this study are as follows:

- 1) What are the advantages of physical classes during the endemic stage in comparison to online classes?
- 2) What are the challenges faced by English teachers in terms of designing classroom activities, maintaining students' attendance and participation during the endemic stage?
- 3) What are the adaptive teaching and classroom strategies used by English teachers to encourage active participation during the endemic stage?

Significance of Research

This research fills in the gap in the existing body of literature pertaining to English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers' perspectives on face-to-face lessons during the endemic stage of COVID-19. There are a plethora of research done on teachers' experiences during the pandemic but there is none done in the field of teaching English as a second language (TESL) that explores ESL teachers' experiences in regards to teaching during the endemic stage. Therefore, the findings of this research will contribute greatly to the benefit of the society considering the changes that have occurred in the teaching and learning of English during the endemic stage with the presence of Standard Operating Procedures (SOP). The findings of this research will help teachers to be aware of the challenges that may come their way in terms of designing classroom activities, maintaining students' attendance and participation during the endemic stage. Teachers who note how participants in this research tackle these challenges will be able to create a better teaching and learning environment for themselves and for their students. Next, the findings also inform teachers of some of the adaptive teaching and classroom strategies that can be implemented to ensure an effective and safe learning environment during the pandemic. Apart from that, parents, one of the important stakeholders, are well-informed that their children's education is taken care of through alternative ways despite the threats COVID-19 poses even during the endemic stage. Last but

not least, this research may motivate researchers to address other notable issues in the field of TESL.

Literature Review

Challenges English Teachers Faced during the COVID-19 Pandemic

The severe consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic have resulted in a temporary slowdown in different sectors of daily activities including the education sector. The impact of the pandemic had caused all classes to be conducted online adopting a new norm, different from what it used to be. The teaching and learning process was transformed from face-to-face to an online teaching environment that heavily relied on technology. Research has revealed various challenges English teachers faced during the pandemic in keeping the online teaching and learning process as effective as possible. Lack of ICT literacy, difficulty in conducting online assessments, increased workload, lack of teacher-student interaction, planning a course, and difficulty in providing immediate feedback were the common challenges English teachers faced during the pandemic.

To begin with, the lack of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) literacy was one of the challenges English teachers faced during the pandemic (Lukas & Yunus 2021). Ko and Rossen (2017) brought to light that teachers who are less technologically savvy often found conducting online classes challenging. Not all teachers were capable of utilizing technology effectively to its full potential. According to Efriana (2021), some teachers were able to use technology but their abilities were limited when it came to incorporating technology into teaching. In fact, it was difficult for the majority of senior teachers to use advanced applications which made them feel burdened, and as a result, online teaching and learning were not as effective. In contrast, young teachers who possess technology competence were able to conduct online classes smoothly during the pandemic (Reimers et al. 2020).

Another challenge faced by English teachers during the pandemic was in terms of conducting online assessments (Al-Samiri 2021). Many teachers felt that the answers or responses students submitted were not their original work when assessments were being done online (Al-Samiri 2021). For instance, Mabrook (2020) found out that students looked for answers during online assessments using a second device. Although there are different anti-cheating software and plagiarism tools available online, not all teachers are provided adequate training to utilise them. In their article, Ali and Abdagane (2020) highlighted a few other strategies to reduce cheating such as paraphrasing the content of objective questions, displaying questions in random order, and reducing the allocated time for assessments. However, without being physically present, there is no guarantee that students are completing assessments independently, making it difficult for teachers to evaluate students' learning progress.

Next, teachers had to cope with the increased workload during the pandemic (Nashir & Laili 2021). Preparing online learning materials, sending emails and replying to them, posting activities for students along with clear instructions, and marking students' submissions online were among the tasks teachers had to complete on a daily basis in addition to having to teach online (Al-Samiri 2021; Nashir & Laili 2021). To add on, during the pandemic, teachers' did not only have to prepare learning materials but teachers were obliged to design interesting learning materials such as attractive learning videos and appealing PowerPoint presentations

that presented content to students in the simplest way possible which was time-consuming for teachers that add to their already full plates (Nashir & Laili 2021).

Furthermore, the lack of teacher-student interaction was another challenge English teachers faced during the pandemic (Askari & Chen 2021). According to Sason and Kellerman (2021), teacher-student interaction is seen as one of the main factors that promote students' success in learning. Effective interaction between teachers and students becomes a challenge when it is done through platforms such as WhatsApp and email during online learning (Sason & Kellerman 2021). For instance, non-verbal cues that support learning such as body language, and facial expressions that are apparent in physical classrooms do not exist in online learning environments. This makes it difficult for teachers to gauge their students' understanding during online lessons unless students choose to communicate and ask questions because students' facial expressions imply their understanding of what is being taught (Sason & Kellerman 2021). In relation to this, the absence of teacher-student interaction during online learning may eventually affect students' motivation to learn (Brenton 2014, as cited in Sason & Kellerman 2021).

Apart from that, planning a course that includes creating a syllabus, designing exercises, and quizzes that ensure a quality online learning experience during the pandemic was the most challenging for teachers (Askari & Chen 2021). Askari and Chen (2021), being teachers themselves, highlighted that designing and incorporating tasks and learning activities that struck the right balance between the content of students' textbooks and authentic, technology-based materials was a demanding task. To be more specific, the crux of the challenge was to sequence tasks in a logical order to enable students to achieve learning outcomes.

Last but not least, providing immediate feedback to students is an important aspect of learning as it not only allows students to know what is expected of them but also encourages students to become aware of misconceptions which helps them improve their academic performance, however, providing feedback to students during the pandemic was a challenge for teachers (Attali & Powers 2010; Putri 2021). Providing immediate feedback to students was challenging because it is a time-consuming process as teachers had to provide extensive feedback in written form since classes were being conducted online (Putri 2021). In this case, teachers tend to provide feedback some time after lessons and not immediately which leads to ineffective feedback (Putri 2021).

Related theories and models

Social Constructivism Theory

Social constructivism is a learning theory developed by Lev Vygotsky that views the active construction of knowledge that occurs among students as a result of social interaction (Adams 2006). From Vygotsky's perspective, students construct meaning from reality, their social environments but do not passively receive what is taught in their learning environment (Liu & Chen 2010). There are five main principles of the theory identified based on previous research (Adams 2006).

First of all, social constructivism theory focuses on learning, not performance. Today's competitive learning environment which has become performance-driven compels teachers

to teach students to prepare them for tests often leaving teachers feeling restricted as they are unable to be creative and take up risks in teaching (Adams 2006). However, as stated, the social constructivist theory focuses on encouraging students to deepen their understanding and obtain satisfaction from success in completing challenging tasks (Adams 2006).

Next, from the social constructivist perspective, students are seen as active co-constructors of meaning and knowledge (Adams 2006). Social constructivism stresses the role of others: teachers and peers, in the process of knowledge construction since learning, primarily, is viewed as a social process (Adams 2006). In relation to this, students need to be given time to collaborate and interact with each other using a variety of communicative techniques in a social constructivist learning environment because students will be able to scaffold their own understanding through interactions (Adams 2006).

Thirdly, a social constructivist-oriented teacher acts as a facilitator during lessons creating space for students to construct knowledge collaboratively in a social environment (Adams 2006). In fact, the constructivist environment supports the idea of involving students in choosing the focus of content based on what they want to learn (Adams 2006). However, this does not mean that the theory removes the need for the teacher in a classroom setting (Adams 2006). Teachers still have to be there as they are the potential source of information in a learning environment (Adams 2006).

Apart from that, the theory emphasizes students being engaged in meaningful activities that are beneficial to their lives (Adams 2006). *“A ‘true’ education is exactly that where learners grasp what is worthwhile for its own sake rather than as means to other ends (such as passing tests or hitting learning targets)”* (Silcock 2003, as cited in Adams 2006). Therefore, it is evident that the social constructivism theory directs teachers to design learning objectives bearing in mind the important factors that support their students’ mental growth.

Finally, social constructivism stresses the need to conduct assessments with the intention of expanding students’ learning potential (Adams 2006). The idea that tests should be conducted to ensure mastery leads to the association of good grades with learning (Adams 2006). Being able to score well does not necessarily mean that students have accomplished the learning outcomes. From a social constructivist view, assessments are not solely to observe whether or not learning has taken place instead assessments are seen as a tool that informs teachers about what their students know, understand, or can do (Adams 2006)

Gagne’s 9 Events of Instruction

Robert Gagne, an educational psychologist created a nine-step process called the events of instruction, a model that provides a structured framework for teachers to plan effective lessons using various delivery methods to accomplish learning objectives (Jaiswal 2019). Gaining attention, informing learners of the objectives, stimulating recall of prior learning, presenting information, providing guidance, eliciting performance, providing feedback, assessing performance, and enhancing retention and transfer are the nine events of instruction included in the model Gagne proposed (Jaiswal 2019).

Gaining attention is the first instructional event. It encourages teachers to draw their students' attention using demonstrations or videos to ensure learning takes place (Jaiswal 2019). Varying voice levels and using gestures are a couple of other ways to gain students' attention (Jaiswal 2019). Next, informing students of the objectives is an important instructional event in ensuring effective lessons. Teachers should let the students know what is expected of them to allow students to achieve the required skills and competencies at the end of a program (Jaiswal 2019). The third instructional event is helping students to recall prior knowledge because students learn best when they associate new information with their existing knowledge (Jaiswal 2019). Students will be able to absorb and assimilate new knowledge effectively (Jaiswal 2019). The following instructional event is presenting the content where teachers should present new content in the simplest way possible to avoid cognitive overload (Jaiswal 2019). Teachers also are encouraged to incorporate a variety of multimedia to cater to students with different learning preferences (Jaiswal 2019). Apart from that, implementing learning guidance is the fifth instructional event Gagne included in his model (Jaiswal 2019). Here, teachers have the responsibility to assist students in learning to ensure they reach their full potential (Jaiswal 2019). Demonstrations, providing analogies, and using teaching aids are among the strategies to guide students in learning.

Besides, in eliciting performance which is the sixth instructional event teachers should provide opportunities for students to engage in hands-on activities to demonstrate their understanding of the topics they have learned (Jaiswal 2019). This strategy encourages students to interact with their peers as it increases student talking time (Jaiswal 2019). Moving on, providing feedback is the seventh instructional event that emphasizes teachers to give immediate feedback to students for them to be able to improve their performance (Jaiswal 2019). Next is assessing performance where teachers keep track of their students' performance through quizzes or tests. Here, students are also encouraged to evaluate their understanding to identify gaps in their knowledge (Jaiswal 2019). The ninth and the last instructional event included in Gagne's model is enhancing retention and transfer (Jaiswal 2019). Here, students reinforce and internalize new learning by applying it to new contexts (Jaiswal 2019).

The SAMR Model

The SAMR model which gained popularity in late 2012 was developed by Ruben Puentedura (Hilton 2016, as cited in Aldosemani 2019). The model provides teachers with a framework to enhance classroom activities by incorporating technology (Wahyuni, Mujiyanto, Rukimini & Fitriati 2020). The SAMR model consists of four levels of technology use namely, substitution, augmentation, modification, and redefinition (Aldosemani 2019). The first level of the SAMR model is substitution where learning activities are substituted with technology without functional changes (Howlett, Allred, Beck & Mysore 2019). Augmentation is the second level of the SAMR model where learning activities are substituted with technology with functional improvements (Howlett et al. 2019). The next level of the SAMR model is the modification level where the use of technology allows significant changes to be made to learning activities (Howlett et al. 2019). Redefinition is the last level of the SAMR model where the use of technology allows the creation of whole new learning activities which will not be possible to complete without using technology (Howlett et al. 2019).

Methodology

Research Design

This study adopts a qualitative research method in examining the objectives of this research. The main intention of choosing the method is to explore in-depth details of the ESL teachers' perceptions on teaching during the endemic stage of Covid-19. According to Denzin (1989), the use of the qualitative method helps researchers to get a detailed explanation of the thoughts, experiences, and reasoning of actions of the participants. Besides, Md Shidur Rahman (2017) mentioned that the advantage of qualitative research is the opportunity to confront the participants during the data collection process like during an interview. The use of oral history in this research enables the researchers to explore the issue through participants' descriptions and clarifications of their actions in their sharing. This is in line with the researchers' intention of getting in-depth knowledge on the issue as stated by Noor Rahamah Hj. Abu Bakar and Mohd. Yusof Hj. Abdullah (2008), the use of open-ended questions and the opportunity of the participants to explain their reasoning would help provide the research with detailed information.

Participants

The participants of this study were 3 in-service English teachers from different secondary schools in Malaysia. The sampling method of choosing the participants was convenience sampling which the researchers got the participants to participate through the selection of schools in the researchers' areas. After the researchers have chosen the schools, the researchers approached the available English teachers at that time and the participants were interviewed individually through face-to-face confrontation. 3 teachers have been interviewed for the data collection process of this research. For confidentiality purposes, the names of the schools were not revealed and only the participants' names will be used in the report. Details of the respondents are as below:

Teacher Azianie

- 34 years old
- Teaching Form 2,3 & 5
- Qualification: Bachelor's Degree (TESL) and Master's Degree (Applied in Linguistics)
- 8 years teaching experience
- Married with 2 daughters

Teacher Vicknes Nambiar

- 33 years old
- Teaching Form 4 & 5
- Qualification: Bachelor's Degree (TESL) and Master's Degree (TESL)
- 9 years teaching experience
- Married with 1 son

Teacher Joanna

- 25 years old
- Teaching Form 2 & 3
- Qualification: Bachelor's Degree (TESL)
- 2 years teaching experience
- Single

Data Collection Tools

The tool that has been used to collect the data for this research was a semi-structured interview. The researchers have created a set of questions related to the research topic and some of them were adapted from the survey questions of Hartshorn and McMurry (2020). The reason for using this semi-structured interview was because it allows the researcher to have more control over the interview session. The researcher can include other questions to get detailed information on certain things or these questions are called probing questions. These questions are unplanned or follow-up questions which are usually used when the speaker wants to get specific information about the response earlier (Ellen & Linda 2006). This will help the researcher to disclose more information related to the topic of research. Moreover, with the use of semi-structured interviews, the researcher can get more authentic data as the data are taken directly from the sources which are the respondents. The instrument used in this study consisted of 38 items. These questions were divided into five (5) main parts as follows:

Part 1: Demographic questions (6 questions)

Part 2: Teachers' experiences during the pandemic and endemic stages. (6 questions)

Part 3: Advantages of physical classes in comparison to online classes during the endemic stage. (6 questions)

Part 4: The challenges faced by English language teachers in terms of designing classroom activities and maintaining students' attendance and participation during the endemic stage. (10 questions)

Part 5: The adaptive teaching and classroom strategies used by English teachers during the lessons to encourage active participation during the endemic stage. (10 questions)

For the demographic part, the respondents were asked about their background as the researcher wants to get the background details about the respondents. As for part 2 to 5, the questions are related to the research questions of the study. The researchers ensured that the respondents understood the purpose of the interview before they answered all the questions by the researchers. All the interview sessions were recorded and transcribed.

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using thematic analysis. After the data collection procedures, the data were transcribed and analyzed thematically. The use of thematic analysis helps the researcher code the data into several themes and classify them accordingly. As mentioned by Neuendorf (2019), the thematic analysis allowed the researchers to find the answers by analyzing the codes and themes patterns of the data collected from the respondents. In thematic analysis, there are 6 phases that guide the researcher in identifying the codes or themes in the data. As mentioned by Braun and Clark (2016) as cited in Maguire and Delahunt (2017), in thematic analysis, the six-phase that guide thematic analysis are:

1. *Become familiar with the data*

- Revise and re-read the data to make sure that the researcher will be familiar with the data and try to highlight the parts that need to be pointed up.

2. *Generate initial codes*

- Start organizing the data systematically by selecting and coding every line of the text to help the researcher relate it to the research questions.

3. *Search for themes*

- Based on the codes that have been generated, identify the patterns, and for the codes that

overlap, try to get them into the same frame so that, they can be fitted as the same theme.

4. Review themes

- Review and modify the themes to ensure whether the data is correlated to the themes found and how the data can support the themes.

5. Define themes

- Figure out the meaning of each theme and how the researcher wants to relate the themes to the main topic of the study.

6. Write-up

- Write the analysis that the researcher has found based on the data analysis.

Oral History Texts

Oral History of Teacher Azianie "Always do your best"

Having a father whose passion is teaching has motivated this passionate and youthful girl to also be in the field of teaching. Getting an early exposure to the world of teaching has sparked her interest in also becoming a teacher. Her passion to learn has derived her to pursue her study at a higher level and now, she is currently able to hold a master's degree in Applied Linguistic after her hard work of balancing both work and study in the past years. However, her passion for the study is still alive and she has also voiced her intention to pursue a PhD in the future although there is no exact time mentioned. In the meantime, she decided to just enjoy her life as a teacher, daughter, wife, and mother to two beautiful daughters who still need her time and attention. Currently, she has been teaching in her second school for almost 6 years after her first posting in Kedah which only lasted for two years. She was thankful to be able to return to her hometown and serve the students and communities in this state.

After experiencing online teaching for the last two years, personally, I think teaching during this endemic stage is much better than the pandemic stage because I have got to teach my students physically in the classroom setting. Since I have experienced both methods which are online and offline, I have a full understanding of how they work. One of the significant differences is I have full control of my students during this endemic stage which enables me to conduct my class easier than before. I can ask my students to do activities and tasks in front of me instead of them doing them on their own like what happened during the pandemic period last two years. Honestly, I think having a physical class does not only benefit me in terms of controlling and assigning tasks for them, but I think it also helps my students a lot since they can ask me directly if they are having any problems with the task given. Besides, another thing that I was thankful for is when I get to control my students during the assessment or examination in class. This is because, during the online class, there was an issue of cheating among students since their exams were online, some of them tried to do it twice and some were found guilty of discussing with their friends during the online exams. In contrast, during this endemic stage, we got to see them answering the exams in class and we are also able to use the full format of the test as before the pandemic period.

Apart from that, I also think this change has boosted my students' motivation in learning. This is because, during the online class, many of my students were not active during the lessons, however, this time around, my students are more motivated to learn and join the class activities because they seem to be excited with the presence of their friends in class. Not only that, but the engagement between us is also a lot better. Compared to the online class, if we ask for volunteers, each time we do activities, it's hard to find the volunteers

whereas in the class, as they see their friends join the activities, they tend to join it too. Hence, I am quite happy with these changes as we basically can have our normal interaction which is face-to-face class as before.

In terms of the challenges, I think there is no problem for us since the endemic stage is basically the same as what we have done before the pandemic happened. I just have to return to my normal mode of teaching which is the conventional method where I must interact with my students physically in class instead of having the lessons online. However, I think the challenges might come during teaching when my students have difficulty refreshing the lessons that I have taught during the online class before. I found out during the first week of having physical class this year is when students did not remember what they have learned during the online class. Thus, I need to repeat the lesson and it costs a lot of time for us since we can actually proceed to another topic instead of repeating the same lessons that they have learned before. Besides, another challenge of teaching during the endemic stage is the limited time for my students to complete the tasks that I have assigned. Before this, during online teaching, students can have 24/7 time to complete and focus on their tasks at home, however, during this endemic stage, the students started to have extra classes and they need to complete the tasks sometimes before the period ends. The third challenge is when I have to consider SOP which is maintaining social distance in class when I want to conduct group activities among students. Even though they can learn face to face, we as the teachers need to always remind them to follow the SOP. Hence, it was quite a problem because students sometimes are too engaged and don't even care about the SOP or whatnot. In the aspects of students' participation, I think personally it was a lot better compared to online classes before. During the online class, it was hard to find a volunteer among them, however, when we have face-to-face class, I can ask a brave student to answer or show an example to others. When they see their friends answering, it motivates other students to follow him/her.

In the case of strategies in getting my students' attention in class, I think the most effective way is by gaining students' attention before teaching the lesson. This is to ensure that my students are ready for the class. What I usually do in my class is, before I start my lesson, I will ask one or two questions about the things related to the topic that I am going to teach during that period. After I get some responses from a few students, I will then proceed to the lesson for that day. However, during the first week of coming to school this year, I decided to create group activities that required them to interact with each other more as I found that students are quite reserved at that time. Through those activities, students started to become more active and participate more. Besides, another strategy to get my students to participate in my class is to make sure that the activities are creative and develop students' interest. In my case, the activities that my students like are usually involved with games, or sometimes I will bring something like pictures to the class to get them to feel more motivated to learn. All my students love to do activities in class and due to that reason, I always try to conduct different activities every time I am teaching a new topic to my students. In my opinion, as a teacher, we have to always experience and apply different methods and approaches in teaching students to make the class meaningful and enjoyable to students instead of sticking to the same way of teaching every time we teach a new topic to pupils.

Since there is still a high probability of my students and even me being infected with this Covid-19 disease, I think it is important for us to always comply with the SOPs that have

been regulated by our Ministry of Education. There are some initiatives that my school management has taken to ensure better compliance with SOPs among its communities. Before the school started, I mean the first day when the school started, the administration used to give them a briefing. What they should do and what they shouldn't do at school. Besides, we still put the rules that we have printed in each of the classes so that the students can read and understand them. Apart from that, it is also the teacher's responsibility to always remind students to follow the SOPs, especially to distance themselves. We put the hand sanitizer where the students can use it whenever they want. Even though there are still no cases of my students' absenteeism due to Covid-19, but then, if it happens, maybe we can provide them with a module and ask them to do it at home. Apart from that, we can give them tasks through WhatsApp. A simple task for them to finish at home or tell them what pages they can do in the textbook. So, it wouldn't cause a problem for them to do it. My only advice for my fellow teachers is to always do our best to teach students regardless of the method or situation that we have to face in this era.

Oral History of Teacher Vicknes "I enjoyed..."

Accepting a scholarship by the Ministry of Education to pursue her B.Ed TESL in University of Portsmouth, UK has become one of the largest stepping stones into becoming a passionate teacher. Having exposure in handling pupils of various ages in different social contexts in different schools and higher education institutes in the UK becomes her precious asset in her teaching career as it enables her teaching and learning sessions to be fun, creative as well as effective. Her learning did not stop there as she decided to pursue her Masters in Education, UKM, 2018 to gain more knowledge on handling Malaysian ESL learners. Most of her presentation in conferences focuses on reflective practice among teachers. Her publication and many of her proceeding articles also focus on reflective teaching which provides insights for teachers to professionally develop themselves for the betterment of their teaching and learning environment. Being a Master Trainer for CEFR for Form 1-5, has strengthened her knowledge on the reformation of our current English Education system while giving her an opportunity to publish a book under Sasbadi publication. Currently, she is teaching in a secondary school in Pandamaran Klang after seven years of service in Pasir Gudang, Johor and is ever ready to contribute in the enhancement of English Language teaching.

I would say COVID 19 pandemic has given both positive and negative impact towards the learning and teaching of English. Looking from a positive point of view, this pandemic has urged both the teachers and pupils to learn, explore, and experiment various technological tools to make online teaching possible and as effective as it could be. Pupils started to do independent learning where they immediately find information through the internet rather than promptly depending on the teachers as to how they would do in their classroom. Some teachers have taken the effort to make their lesson creative and fun thus attracting more pupils to take part in the class. Surprisingly, those who are not active in the class had the tendency to be part of online lessons. At the end of the day, effective online teaching has created versatile teachers and pupils. The best part is, the habit of doing my own research and communicating with teachers throughout the day to learn has prolonged even after the physical classes have started.

On the other hand, it is very difficult to overlook the negative impact of COVID 19 pandemic towards teaching and learning. Teachers took a very long time to unlearn and

relearn new methods of teaching to accommodate the pupils during the pandemic. In the meantime, lessons were conducted through sharing materials in platforms such as Telegram, Google Classroom and WhatsApp which then encouraged some pupils to complete the given task and some chose not to. The worst part is, the school management could not do much in making sure the attendance of the pupils. Well, parents were called up and pupils were forced to attend the classes, but it didn't quite work. Another issue was the fact that teachers could not monitor pupil's learning habits. Sometimes, we don't get anyone turning on their video or verbally responding during the lesson which could also mean the pupils are either concentrating or not. Some content of the syllabus could not be covered effectively as online teaching and learning platforms did not give the space and convenience for teachers to do so.

Besides that, I personally would say that assigning tasks through online platforms during COVID 19 pandemic was more effective than the conventional way of assigning tasks in the classroom because pupils will be able to refer to the teacher's messages in the platform used at any time in a day. The pupil's own effort in making sure to get themselves updated regarding the tasks assigned would be another challenge. Those who wish to improvise themselves and get better in their learning, will surely complete the tasks on time and would request for feedback from the teacher. At this point, the instructions and the tasks assigned via various platforms are often effective as pupils can have access to them at any time. In addition, during the endemic stage, assessment can be done physically which means pupils can be monitored and their attitude towards attempting the assessment can be monitored as well. Teachers can also identify the issues among pupils that need to be rectified in upcoming lessons. This was rather impossible during the pandemic stage as assessments were conducted online. Pupils' attitude in attempting the assessment could not be monitored because the internet and advanced technological gadgets would have given them space to seek for answers. This happened in my school where the student who was targeted to get D in his examination managed to get an A+ when the assessment was conducted online during the pandemic. Surely it wasn't valid data.

Lastly, online teaching was more relaxing as a teacher. We kind of got the chance to stay away from quite a lot of clerical work but when it comes to teaching, I was personally very excited to be back to teach in the classroom. Nothing is more satisfying in having a teaching and learning session with pupils face to face. To be able to witness them engaging in a lesson is the real happiness in teaching.

Oral History of Teacher Joanna "I would not have it any other way"

To become a teacher has not always been Joanna's ambition despite growing up with a father who is a successful teacher himself. Sometimes, things we expect the least happens. Just like that, Joanna, currently, is a teacher at an international school who teaches English language and Literature to both primary and secondary students who lovingly call her Miss Joanna. Her students love Joanna with their whole hearts for the kind of teacher she is. Back in 2017, Joanna enrolled herself in a TESL program at a private university not knowing that she would soon become a teacher who finds joy in teaching young minds. As Joanna steps into her third year of teaching, she realizes that the passion for teaching was always in her and got unveiled as she started teaching. Today, the 25-year-old believes that teaching is more than just a job, she sees it as an opportunity to help children reach their full potential, encouraging them to

become whatever they want to be in the future. From a young lady who did not dream of becoming a teacher to being a teacher now respected and adored by many students, Joanna who found her love for teaching expressed that she would not have it any other way.

Teaching during the pandemic was definitely a roller coaster ride. Tons of ups and downs. I am truly grateful that Malaysia has finally progressed to the endemic stage. So, being back at school after so long feels great. I have to say that I enjoy every bit of the teaching experience now. It is so much easier when all of my students are back physically at school because I can finally fully focus on my students without having to worry about other issues. Certain things were different during the pandemic. It was challenging for me to gauge my students' understanding of certain topics because some would not show up for lessons, some would choose not to participate in classroom activities and the most difficult part was providing immediate feedback because it was a time-consuming process. Since we are back, I am constantly aware of my students' learning progress. I know whether or not my students have understood what has been taught because physical classes provide opportunities for me to provide immediate feedback and for students to ask questions. Next, I find it way easier to monitor my students and guide them in completing their classwork which motivates them to participate in the classroom.

Not to forget, being back physically allows my students to be involved in more hands-on activities that support learning.

In terms of participation and engagement in classroom activities, I observe that some of my students have become active participants. They are not only excited to be back at school but they are also excited to see their friends and to work with them. My students are able to complete tasks with their friends since they are free to work in pairs and groups now. While some students show great enthusiasm in participating and communicating in class, there are a handful of students who are quite the opposite. Some students have become shy and quieter and choose not to participate. I see this happening quite often with students who joined the school in the middle of the pandemic who did not have a proper chance to get to know their classmates. I believe I have given my best shot at making them feel comfortable in my lessons. What I did, for the first few days, when my students first came back to school was not to talk about studies. We spent time getting to know each other through icebreakers and sharing sessions. I quickly realized that letting students talk and share how they spent their MCO days sort of gave them a chance to express their feelings which helped them to pay attention and participate freely without hesitation a lot better during lessons later on. I always share stories and crack jokes in between lessons just to lighten the mood which worked great in encouraging my students to participate. Besides getting my students involved in hands-on activities to encourage participation, I make sure to include one or two Kahoot sessions at the end of most of my lessons to increase student engagement since the majority of my students are obsessed with Kahoot.

Apart from that, conducting assessments during the pandemic was a hassle because some students would not submit their assessments, and even if they did submit, their assessments would be incomplete making it difficult for me to grade them. What is good about conducting assessments during the endemic stage is that I get to see the students complete their assessments and that too on their own within the allotted time. This does

not only ease the grading process but also allows me to see their understanding of the topics I teach. Through these assessments I conduct, I notice improvements in my students' performance. When they first came back to school after nearly 2 years of online learning, I would say that their performance dropped. It was not as good as how it was before the pandemic. Lack of participation and interaction between my students and I during online classes could be the reason. However, as I said, my students' performance is improving because they seem to learn a lot better when they collaborate with their friends in addition to having teachers available all the time which makes it easy for them to ask questions immediately.

Just when I thought everything is going to get better when the government announced that schools can conduct physical classes, different challenges came my way. It did not occur to me that teaching students in the endemic stage can come with its own challenges too. After all, all of us are still trying to adapt to the shift to physical classes from online classes. To begin with, I had to change activities in my lesson plans. I could no longer incorporate certain activities that I used during online classes into physical classes. Here I had to think of creative alternatives which I found to be challenging. For instance, collaborating to create a poster digitally can be fun in an online learning environment. However, when the same activity is done in a physical class, there is a possibility for some students to end up not contributing to the activity. From what I have observed before, during group activities that involve one iPad per group, usually, only a couple of students will contribute to completing such activities. Other than that, at the beginning of the endemic stage, my school practised hybrid learning where students were given the flexibility to either attend classes in person or virtually from home. Planning lessons for these two different groups was a challenge because I had to, at the very least, think of different classroom activities that suit the learning environment.

Being in physical classrooms at school where technical difficulties are expected to be one of the last things teachers have to worry about, to my surprise, occurred frequently whenever I try to airplay my PowerPoint (PPT) slides to the Apple tv in my classroom. This incident made me think of the online days when students would immediately be able to see my slides within a few seconds once I click on 'start presenting'. In addition to this, making learning materials accessible to students is an issue now during the endemic stage. When classes were online, I used to post everything on Google Classroom from the PPT slides I presented to the worksheets I used. This allowed students to access these materials at any time. However, with being back to physical classes, now, they do not have the same privilege which compels my students to be a little more responsible when they are given handouts because when I give out printed copies of learning materials, my students have the tendency of losing or leaving them at home.

With the presence of SOPs, designing classroom activities became a daunting task for me. In the initial phase of the endemic stage, I limited classroom activities to individual work where I usually ask my students to complete tasks independently with me assisting them whenever necessary, or at most I allowed pair work to foster some kind of interaction between students. What was upsetting was the fact that I was unable to conduct group activities which are way more fun and interactive due to the 1-meter distance SOP. I would not say that the 1-meter distance SOP or any other SOPs for that matter have affected students' learning process in a negative way because there is always another way to go about

it, but, this whole situation did result in limited social interaction among my students. However, things are different currently since the 1-meter distance SOP has been lifted. Students get to enjoy working in groups now.

Maintaining students' attendance was another challenge that came my way. At the very beginning of the endemic stage, many of my students were absent from school for various reasons. Some students were absent because they were unwell after getting vaccinated while some were not able to attend school because of quarantine. My school organized quite a number of activities in an effort to excite the students and encourage them to come to school because there were students who were not motivated to come back after experiencing online learning in the comfort of their homes. Class parties, a one-day camp, and an event called Character Parade where students got to dress up as different characters were among the activities I recall being a part of to welcome students back to school. I observed that events and activities like these gave students something to look forward to coming to school after going through difficult times during the pandemic. Well, what I shared was the school's effort in motivating students to attend school. What I do, as a teacher, to maintain my students' attendance besides contacting parents is I try to keep my lessons as interactive and fun as possible. Overall, I would say that attendance during the endemic stage is far better than during the pandemic where my students would be absent due to unstable internet connectivity. These days parents also have become more willing to send their children to school despite the existence of COVID-19.

Although we have entered the endemic stage, COVID-19 is far from over because the virus is still a threat to many. In line with this, my school makes sure that all students and staff are wearing face masks at all times especially when we are inside classrooms or in any other enclosed space. Regular sanitisation of hands is a must. Besides, if students or staff get tested positive for COVID-19 they are advised to immediately go through self-quarantine. The school is doing its part in SOP compliance whenever students are in common areas. When it comes to my classroom, as a teacher, besides putting up the dos and don'ts posters, I always remind my students to keep their masks on during lessons and to sanitise their hands regularly. Yes, they do forget to practise these things sometimes but with constant reminders, my students are complying with SOPs well in the classroom. In terms of seating arrangements, my students sit in groups of four since the 1-meter distance SOP has been lifted.

As I said, COVID-19 is not over. There are possibilities for teachers and students to get infected by the virus anytime. So, it is important to be on our toes at all times to be able to quickly adapt to changes because the teaching and learning process has to continue despite the obstacles. If I had to quarantine myself in the case of being Covid positive, I will post learning materials on Google Classroom and get my students to complete the tasks I have assigned and submit them to the relief teacher. Another way is that I will teach online from home and my students who are at school will watch me on the screen as I teach. This is how I will make sure the teaching and learning process continues if I am in quarantine. If it is the other way around with my students in quarantine, besides posting tasks with clear instructions, I will allocate time for consultation sessions within the working hours to guide my students in completing their work. With this, students get to learn even if they are not physically at school.

Findings and Discussion

RQ1: What are the advantages of physical classes during the endemic stage in comparison to online classes?

Based on the data gathered for the first research question from all three participants, there are three sub-themes identified and discussed accordingly: providing immediate feedback, assessing students effectively, and increased performance.

Providing Immediate Feedback

From the data collected, it is evident that all three teachers were able to provide immediate feedback to their students during physical classes. Teacher Joanna who sees it as an advantage of physical classes said *“one of the benefits of teaching in the classroom would be, being able to know whether my students understand what has been taught because I am able to give immediate feedback to the students...”*.

Attali and Powers (2010), in their article, emphasizes the importance of providing immediate feedback to students as it supports learning. Immediate feedback not only allows students to know what is expected of them but also encourages students to become aware of misconceptions which helps them improve their academic performance (Attali & Powers 2010). In relation to this, teacher Vicknes had students seeking feedback to improve themselves where she said *“those who wish to improvise themselves and get better in their learning, complete their tasks on time and request for feedback from the teacher”*. Moreover, teacher Azianie also had a similar experience where her *“students were excited to see teachers face-to-face as they can ask feedback and questions directly.”*

This finding reflects the application of one of Gagne’s nine events of instruction in teaching which is to provide feedback. Providing immediate feedback on students' work allows them to identify gaps in their knowledge giving them an opportunity to improve themselves (Wong 2018). This was highly notable in teacher Vicknes’s experience where her students requested feedback to enhance their learning experience.

Assessing Students Effectively

Possibilities for cheating are high when assessments are conducted online. This is proven by Mabrook (2020) who revealed that students searched for answers during online assessments using different devices. Although there are strategies to reduce cheating as highlighted in the literature review section above, without being physically present, there is no guarantee that students are completing assessments independently. Based on the interview, two out of three teachers agreed that the process of assessing students is way more effective during physical classes with the teacher being physically present to monitor the students. For instance, teacher Azianie feels that during physical classes *“assessments are more valid as we can control the students”*.

Meanwhile, teacher Joanna does not only find assessments during physical classes effective as students can be monitored but she also highlights that assessments in a face-to-face learning environment allow her to evaluate her students’ learning progress as she shared during the interview *“...in terms of assessment, now in the endemic stage compared to the pandemic stage, I get to see the students complete their assessments...through the answers students submit, I can see their understanding of certain topics.”*. This reflects the application

of another aspect of Gagne's nine events of instruction in teaching which is assessing performance. Teacher Joanna is able to see her students' level of understanding through the assessments that she conducts as the assessments she implements provide her students with opportunities to demonstrate their proficiency. This is supported by Jaiswal (2019) who stated that teachers often assess students to gauge if they have accomplished the intended learning outcomes.

Increased Performance

The participants' responses during the interview for this research question particularly revealed that their students' performance improved during the endemic stage. For example, teacher Azianie shared that she realized her students were performing academically better as *"they felt motivated and seemed to be more interested in joining activities when they are with their friends."* Besides, teacher Vicknes also was able to see improvement in her students' performance as she *"involved students in lessons rather than focusing on teacher talking time"*. Then, there is teacher Joanna who thinks that *"there's improvement in their performance. I can also see that they are learning better since they have their friends and teachers available all the time. Their results are getting better compared to when they first came back to school."*

This finding can be related to the social constructivism theory. The theory sheds light on the importance of social interaction and knowledge sharing among students in their understanding and knowledge construction process (Sardareh & Saad 2012). To add on, social constructivists believe that knowledge is socially constructed through collaborations (Sardareh & Saad 2012). From the data gathered, all three participants pointed out that their students' performance improved as a result of students actively collaborating with each other when completing activities in addition to receiving feedback from teachers. Therefore, it is evident that students learn better when collaboration and social interaction are incorporated into their learning.

RQ2: What are the challenges faced by English teachers in terms of designing classroom activities, students' attendance, and participation during the endemic stage?

Designing Classroom Activities

Two sub themes have been found under designing classroom activities which are limitations to group activities due to SOP and adapting to changes from online to conventional learning environments.

The first subtheme, limitation to group activities due to SOP has been derived after the researchers analyzed the data from the respondents. Based on the data, all three respondents agreed that one of the challenges in designing classroom activities during this endemic stage is when the teachers need to consider and give precautions to the SOP even when they want to conduct class activities. For example, according to Teacher Azianie *"Even though they can learn face-to-face, we as the teachers need to follow the SOPs, still need to maintain their distance between the students even though they are having a discussion in class."* The SOP that the teachers and school communities have to follow is they must maintain the social distance between one another even in the classroom setting. Due to this reason, two of the respondents said that they chose to modify their activities or just reconsider group activities in their lessons so that the social distancing can still be applied in their class. As mentioned by Teacher Vicknes, *"Modifying the activities and materials to*

ensure they have limited contact with each other is still a challenge” while Teacher Joanna added, “We couldn't do a lot of group activities. So, what I did was, there were a lot of individual activities going on initially because of the 1-meter distance rule.” Thus, this limitation has caused the teachers to reconsider some of the activities before they conduct them in class as they want to make sure that the SOP of social distancing can still be applied in class.

In relation to the social constructivism theory, the application of the social constructivism concept is not applicable to the learning of these students during this endemic stage. As mentioned above, these students are prevented from having close social interactions with others to make sure that social distancing can still be maintained among them. According to Aljohani (2017), one of the essential elements of Vygotsky's theory is to ensure that learning happens through interactions with other students, teachers, and the world at large. This means that for the learning to take place, the students should have more social interactions with others including having group collaborative learning or small group discussion among them to encourage the students in constructing their knowledge among themselves. Besides, having group activities can motivate students to learn better as they get to share their ideas and thoughts on the learning within the small group without being worried about being right or wrong as what they usually felt when doing an individual task.

The second subtheme in designing classroom activities is adapting to changes from online to conventional learning environments. According to these teachers, there are some things that they need to adapt after the reopening of the school in this endemic era. According to Teacher Azianie, students are now having limited time to complete their tasks compared to during online classes. She mentioned, *“Before this, during the pandemic, they can have 24/7 time in order to finish their work, but this time around, during the endemic stage they are starting to have the extra class.”* Apart from that, teacher Joanna also mentioned how students get to access materials easily during online class compared to this time around. As she mentioned in her interview, *“During online classes, I post everything from the slides I use to the worksheets on Google Classroom. The students could easily access them. Now, they don't have that privilege. Even if I give them printed copies of the materials, they will either lose them or leave them at home.”* In the case of Teacher Vicknes, she also thinks that online class is better because she was able to get free from clerical duties in school as what she needs to face during this endemic stage.

Teacher Vickness stated that *“To tell the truth online teaching was more relaxing as a teacher. We kind of got the chance to stay away from quite a lot of clerical work.”*

Although it is a good thing that teachers and students are now allowed to have physical classes in the classroom setting, it cannot be denied that some of them were still relishing their moment of getting the privilege of online teaching and learning during the pandemic stage. As mentioned by Thaheem et al. (2021), online teaching has some sort of flexibility for students and teachers in accessing materials as well as assigning the task to students. Moreover, the students will have no excuse for not knowing what they need to study or submit for the class works since all materials are accessible online. Besides, according to Hiing and Aziz (2022), online teaching has offered an opportunity for educators to demonstrate their creativity during the planning and teaching of their lessons. In relation to that, during online classes, teachers can just focus on their preparation for teaching their students online

instead of thinking about the clerical workload that they need to do if they are working at school.

Students' Attendance

It was found that, in the aspect of the student's attendance, the challenge of teaching in the endemic stage is the students' poor attendance.

School attendance is one of the aspects that need to be looked upon in students' school life as it can become the predictor of their performance in school. There are many effects of absenteeism on students and among them is that it can cause students to miss important lessons in class and result in them being left behind throughout the lesson (Kirkskey 2019). According to the data of this research, the attendance of the students is quite disappointing. Students were absent from school because of some reasons due to the Covid-19 spread which the teacher cannot do much to control. As mentioned by Teacher Joanna, *"There were also students who were absent because of vaccination appointments. They will also be absent for a few days after saying that they are not feeling well after getting vaccinated. Some students are also absent when their parents or siblings are tested COVID positive."* Besides, another challenge is when the teacher or school cannot do much in maintaining students' attendance as stated by Teacher Vickness, *"The worst part is, the school management could not do much in making sure the attendance of the pupils. Well, parents were called up and pupils were forced to attend the classes, but it didn't quite work."* However, there is an opposite opinion from Teacher Azianie. In the case of Teacher Azianie, she thinks that the attendance of her students is better during this endemic stage compared to the pandemic era as her students seem to be obligated to come to school when they have physical classes. Hence, even when teachers are content with this way of teaching and getting to teach their students in class during this endemic stage, due to poor attendance, it still affects the teaching and learning in class.

Students' Participation

The next aspect of challenges in teaching during the endemic stage is in terms of students' participation. The subtheme found is a lack of participation from students.

Based on the findings, the teachers think that students do not participate much in class activities during the endemic stage. According to Teacher Joanna, her students seem to be affected by the Covid-19 situation as she stated, *"I think COVID really affected some of the students. Some students, when they come back to school, they become quieter, they don't really socialize, they get a bit shy."* This seems to affect the class participation because students were not interested to join or contribute to the discussion in class. Besides, Teacher Azianie also encountered the same problem. However, she decided to take action to curb this problem from continuing in her class. As mentioned by Teacher Azianie, *"Usually, I will ask for volunteers. So, the brave students can show examples to those who are a bit scared."* When she found out that her students were not participating in class, she decided to use peer influence to help her control the class. As mentioned in social constructivism theory, learning is a social activity. Thus, by getting some students to show examples, it will motivate other students to also follow the action which is by trying to answer the questions together or help their friends by giving hints to get the correct answers. Motivation is also a crucial element in learning since it gives students the inner strength to keep learning.

RQ3: What are the adaptive teaching and classroom strategies used by English teachers during lessons to encourage active participation during the endemic stage?*Gaining Students' Attention*

The sub theme was very interesting. All three respondents agreed in gaining student's attention because that would be their ultimate objective. Firstly, Teacher Azianie has mentioned asking questions on the topic that she is going to teach. This would be an introduction for the students and they would have the curiosity to learn more about the topic which will be taught in the class. Where else, Teacher Joanna would call out their names to get their attention and focus on the lesson and have lots of ice breakers in order for them to adapt to the current learning situation. Not only that, Teacher Azianie added that she would ask for volunteers and they would be an example to the weaker students. Next, Teacher Joanna would use Kahoot to engage her students in her lesson. The students would definitely complete their work and compare their scores with their friends.

Improve Students Attendance

The second sub theme would be improving students' attendance. Teacher Vicknes would call the parents and would force them to attend the class but it didn't work well because students are not well and parents are afraid of sending their kids to school due to Covid 19 infection. Next, Teacher Joanna would just contact the parents if the students are absent. This is because a teacher has to contact the parents if their kids are absent from school.

Varying the Activities

The third sub theme is varying the activities. Based on the findings, the teachers would constantly vary their activities to gain students attention. According to Teacher Azianie, she would create group activities in order for the students to interact with each other and the students like games and bringing pictures for them to feel motivated in the class. Besides that, Teacher Vicknes has explained that lessons have to be more interactive and fun. To add on, Teacher Joanna asked the students to design face masks of their own and they get to use their iPads to design their own face mask. This would encourage them to participate. She strongly agrees with the fact that hands-on activities involve digital tools to encourage the students' participation. This finding reflects the integration of the substitution level of the SAMR Model as the teacher made the students use a digital tool to create face masks instead of drawing on paper.

Alternative Way of Teaching and Learning

The last sub theme is alternative ways of teaching and learning. All three respondents have used WhatsApp, module, Telegram and Google Classroom in their class and this has increased the students' involvement and participation in the class. Teacher Vicknes said she would just assign tasks to them and provide instructions on how to handle them. She doesn't need to worry because her students are familiar with the medium of learning. This finding reflects the practice of the modification level of the SAMR Model as the teacher used a digital platform to post worksheets and activities.

Conclusion

It can be concluded that Social Constructivism, Gagne's 9 events of teaching and SAMR model theories were widely used among teachers during the endemic phase of teaching and

learning . This is because of the roles of the teachers considering their students' knowledge and allowing them to put that knowledge into practice. In addition, thorough and personalized information on the advantages of physical classes during the endemic stage in comparison to online classes in terms of immediate feedback, assessing students effectively and increased performance is derived from the personal interpretation of three different teachers who responded to various questions following closely to our research questions. These teachers have used this theory with their students and have attained various positive feedbacks from the students. They also have claimed that effective lessons could be conducted among pupils who were willing to commit and are efficient in independent learning at home. Feedback was also provided efficiency among teachers through different online platforms available. Chances of increasing pupils performance was also evident providing that the pupils involved were following the flow and the requirement of lessons. To sum up, online lessons were effective only for the pupils who were actively involved and not for those who failed to attend classes and participate in lessons. On the other hand, during the endemic stage, pupils tend to be more involved including the ones who were not actively participating during the pandemic stage. Teachers also had more control over pupils' attendance and response in the classroom as they can monitor and witness how a particular student is responding to lessons. However, it is worth noting there were only three respondents in this research. Therefore, it may not be fair to generalize the perceptions elicited from the respondents. Hence, future research may suggest the involvement of more respondents which includes educators from various teaching backgrounds and experiences.

References

- Adams, P. (2006). Exploring social constructivism: Theories and practicalities. *Education*, 34(3), 243–257.
- Aldosemani, T. (2019). Inservice teachers' perceptions of a professional development plan based on SAMR model: A case study. *Turkish Online Journal of Educational Technology (TOJET)*, 18(3), 46–53.
- Ali, R., & Abdalgane, M. (2020). Teaching English literacy in the time of COVID-19 pandemic in higher education: A case study in Saudi Qassim University. *Multicultural Education*, 6(5), 204–215.
- Aljohani, M. (2017). Principles of constructivism in foreign language teaching. *Journal of Literature and Art Studies*, 7(1), 97–107. <https://doi.org/10.17265/2159-5836/2017.01.013>
- Al-Samiri, R. A. (2021). English language teaching in Saudi Arabia in response to the COVID-19 pandemic: Challenges and positive outcomes. *Arab World English Journal (AWEJ) Special Issue on COVID-19*, 19, 148–162.
- Askari, H., & Chen, L. (2021). Challenges and opportunities of teaching online in an Iranian EFL high school context during the COVID-19 pandemic. *The Reading Matrix: An International Online Journal*, 21(2), 1–15.
- Attali, Y., & Powers, D. (2010). Immediate feedback and opportunity to revise answers to open-ended questions. *Educational and Psychological Measurement*, 70(1), 22–35.
- Brenton, S. (2014). Effective online teaching and learning. In H. Fry, S. Ketteridge, & S. Marshall (Eds.), *A handbook for teaching and learning in higher education* (pp. 161–173). Routledge.

- Chen, S. C., & Chou, C. M. (2022). Teaching innovation and student evaluation data: A pre- vs peri-COVID-19 comparison. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 13, 963953. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.963953>
- Denzin, N. K. (1989). *Interpretive interactionism*. Sage.
- Ellen, T., & Linda, C. (2022). *Program development and evaluation*. University of Wisconsin-Extension. Retrieved June 24, 2022, from <https://fyi.extension.wisc.edu/programdevelopment/files/2016/04/tipsheet34.pdf>
- Efriana, L. (2021). Problems of online learning during COVID-19 pandemic in EFL classroom and the solution. *JELITA: Journal of English Language Teaching and Literature*, 2(1), 38–47.
- Fu, Q. K., Lam, Y. W., Wong, M. W., & Yang, Y. (2023). Examining teachers' behavioural intention for online teaching after COVID-19 pandemic: A large-scale survey. *Education and Information Technologies*, 28, 6911–6931. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10639-022-11417-6>
- Hartshorn, K. J., & McMurry, B. L. (2020). The effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on ESL learners and TESOL practitioners in the United States. *International Journal of TESOL Studies*, 2(2), 140–156. <https://doi.org/10.46451/ijts.2020.09.11>
- Hilton, J. T. (2016). A case study of the application of SAMR and TPACK for reflection on technology integration into two social studies classrooms. *The Social Studies*, 107(2), 68–73.
- Howlett, K. M., Allred, J., Beck, D., & Mysore, A. R. (2019). An English learner service-learning project: Preparing education majors using technology and the SAMR model. *CALL-EJ*, 20(2), 128–149.
- Izhar, N. A., Na, Y. M. A., & Na, K. S. (2021). Teaching in the time of COVID-19: The challenges faced by teachers in initiating online class sessions. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, 11(2), 1294–1306.
- Jaiswal, P. (2019). Using learner-centered instructional approach to foster students' performances. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 9(9), 1074–1080.
- Kirksey, J. J. (2019). Academic harms of missing high school and the accuracy of current policy thresholds: Analysis of preregistered administrative data from a California school district. *AERA Open*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2332858419867692>
- Klein, A. (2021, April). A year of tremendous growth: How the pandemic forced teachers to master technology. *Education Week*. Retrieved July 29, 2022, from <https://www.edweek.org/technology/a-year-of-tremendous-growth-how-the-pandemic-forced-teachers-to-master-technology/2021/04>
- König, J., Jäger-Biela, D. J., & Glutsch, N. (2020). Adapting to online teaching during COVID-19 school closure: Teacher education and teacher competence effects among early career teachers in Germany. *European Journal of Teacher Education*, 43(4), 608–622. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02619768.2020.1809650>
- Ko, S., & Rossen, S. (2017). *Teaching online: A practical guide*. Routledge.
- Lukas, B. A., & Yunus, M. M. (2021). ESL teachers' challenges in implementing e-learning during COVID-19. *International Journal of Learning, Teaching and Educational Research*, 20(2), 330–348.
- Mabrook, A. M., & Mabrook, A. (2020). Distant learning: Its impact on EFL students due to COVID-19, Onaizah Colleges, Saudi Arabia. *International Journal of Contemporary Applied Researches*, 7(8), 14–31.

- Maguire, M., & Delahunt, B. (2017). Doing a thematic analysis: A practical, step-by-step guide for learning and teaching scholars. *All Ireland Journal of Higher Education*, 8(3), 3351–33514.
- Maćkowski, M., Żabka, M., Kempa, W., Rojewska, K., & Spinczyk, D. (2022). Computer-aided math learning as a tool to assess and increase motivation in learning math by visually impaired students. *Disability and Rehabilitation: Assistive Technology*, 17(5), 559–570.
- Md Shidur Rahman. (2017). The advantages and disadvantages of using qualitative and quantitative approaches and methods in language testing and assessment research: A literature review. *Journal of Education and Learning*, 6(1), 102–112.
- Ministry of Education Malaysia. (2020). *Press release: School closure and transition to online learning*. Putrajaya: MoE.
- Nashir, M., & Laili, R. N. (2021). English teachers' perception toward the switch from offline to online teaching during the lockdown in the midst of the COVID-19 outbreak. *Edukatif: Jurnal Ilmu Pendidikan*, 3(2), 250–260.
- Neuendorf, K. A. (2019). Content analysis and thematic analysis. In P. Brough (Ed.), *Research methods for applied psychologists: Design, analysis, and reporting* (pp. 211–223). Routledge.
- Noor Rahamah, H. A. B., & Mohd. Yusof, H. A. (2008). The life history approach: Fieldwork experience. *E-Bangi Journal*, 3(1), 1–9.
- Ramayah, B., & Kumar, R. (2020). Challenges towards online teaching during COVID-19 pandemic in Malaysia: University lecturers' perspective. *Proceedings of the 13th Annual International Conference of Education, Research and Innovation*. <https://doi.org/10.21125/iceri.2020.0132>
- Samsuri, A., Amanlina, A. M., Nur Nazmi, L. M. N., Wan Nurdiyana, W. M., Ali Najah, A., Marzuki, I., & Zamzam Tuah, A. R. (2020). Air quality status during 2020 Malaysia Movement Control Order (MCO) due to 2019 novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV) pandemic. *Science of The Total Environment*, 729, 139022.
- Sardareh, S. A., & Saad, M. R. M. (2012). A sociocultural perspective on assessment for learning: The case of a Malaysian primary school ESL context. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 66, 343–353.
- Sason, H., & Kellerman, A. (2022, June). Teacher-student interaction in distance learning in emergency situations. In *InSITE 2022: Informing Science & IT Education Conferences* (p. 033).
- Silcock, P. (2003). Accelerated learning: A revolution in teaching method. *Education* 3–13, 31(1), 48–52.
- Soon, H. C., & Aziz, A. A. (2022). Teaching English online during the COVID-19 pandemic: A systematic literature review (2020–2022). *International Journal of Academic Research in Progressive Education and Development*, 11(2), 678–699.
- Soon, T. (2020). E-learning and higher education in the pre- and post-COVID-19 situation. *Higher Education in Southeast Asia and Beyond*, 8, 2–4.
- Suhaimi, S., & Rohaziah, Y. (2020). Managing crisis with unprecedented measures: The case of Movement Control Order on COVID-19 in Malaysia. *Journal of Critical Reviews*, 7(9), 110–115.
- Sulaiman, A. A., & Ariffin, M. A. (2022). E-learning readiness during the school suspension caused by the COVID-19 pandemic: A case of English language teachers in Sabah, Malaysia. *Journal of ICT in Education*, 9(2), 32–47. <https://doi.org/10.37134/jictie.vol9.2.4.2022>

- Thaheem, S. K., Mohamad, J. Z. A., Mirza, Q., & Pathan, H. U. (2021). Online teaching benefits and challenges during pandemic COVID-19: A comparative study of Pakistan and Indonesia. *Asian Education and Development Studies*, 10(2), 270–282. <https://doi.org/10.1108/AEDS-08-2020-0189>
- Todd, S. (2021, August 13). With Delta on the rise, are kids safe going back to school? *Quartz*. <https://qz.com/2047416/how-to-keep-your-kids-safe-as-delta-variant-spreads/>
- United Nations. (2020). *Policy brief: Education during COVID-19 and beyond*. United Nations.
- Wahyuni, S., Mujiyanto, J., Rukmini, D., & Fitriati, S. W. (2020, June). Teachers' technology integration into English instructions: SAMR model. In *International Conference on Science and Education and Technology (ISET 2019)* (pp. 546–550). Atlantis Press.
- Wong, Y. L. (2018). Utilizing the principles of Gagne's nine events of instruction in the teaching of Goldmann Applanation Tonometry. *Advances in Medical Education and Practice*, 9, 45–50.
- World Health Organization. (2020). *COVID-19 educational disruption and response*. WHO.