

The Emergence of the SAC Process of Coping and Transitioning from the Lenses of Nurse Educators

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ABSTRACT

The COVID-19 Outbreak has compelled many universities and any other learning institutions to immediately switch to the online platform in the continued delivery of lessons. Pandemic Teaching has allowed many to rethink how much course content is enough to achieve course learning objectives, and to reimagine traditional assessments as new and different learning opportunities. This study explored on the lived experience of university educators as they transition from the online learning to face-to-face classes. The study utilized the phenomenology design, specifically Hermeneutic phenomenology in better understanding the meaning and experience of the participants in searching for relevant themes and engaging with the data interpretatively. Emerged from study are three major themes, namely, **Theme 1. The Emerging Struggles**, **Theme 2. The Actualizing Anticipation**, and **Theme 3. The Resurfacing Contentment**, which are reflective of the experiences of the participants. These emergent themes led into the development of the SAC Process of Coping and Transitioning which is a process which university nurse educators went through as they are being ushered in the so-called teaching-learning in the New Normal. This highlights the experience of university nurse educators as they went through a phase of Struggles, Anticipation and Contentment (SAC) as a process of coping and transitioning as they disembark from the online learning into a face-to-face learning in the course of the COVID-19 pandemic. This process is reflective of the insightful and meaningful journey of educators that helped in reshaping their perspectives in continually delivering quality and effective teaching-learning to their students in the new normal.

Keywords: coping, educators, phenomenology, struggles, transitioning

INTRODUCTION

The Covid-19 pandemic has disrupted the normal process of the entire globe. All individual from all walks of life has significantly suffered from this sudden uneventful occurrence. The profound effects of the Covid-19 pandemic are being especially felt in education (Marinoni, Land & Jensen, 2020; Schelicher, 2020; Stambough, Curtin, Gililand, Guild, Kain, Karas, et al., 2020). The Covid-19 outbreak has compelled many universities to immediately switch to the online delivery of lessons.

Pandemic teaching has allowed many to rethink how much course content is enough to achieve course learning objectives, and to reimagine traditional assessments as new and different learning opportunities. Carrying this forward into design or re-design of in-person courses will ensure that the focus remains on the learning. Face-to-face learning is an instructional method where course content and learning material are

taught in-person to a group of students. This allows for a live interaction between a learner and an instructor. Face-to-face learning ensures a better understanding and recollection of lesson content and gives class members a chance to bond with one another.

It is the intent of the researcher to explore on the lived experience of university educators as they moved into the phase of the new normal, a transition into the face-to-face classes from the purely online learning as brought about by the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic. The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic does not affect only the students, but also greatly affects the educators. As the education sectors shifted from the pre-pandemic to the in-pandemic with the onset of the Covid-19, in the recent times, there is another shift that occurs which is from the in-pandemic to the post-pandemic or the new normal. It can be realized that there is a process that surfaced out in describing and understanding better the phenomenon of learning in the new normal that is being experienced by all sectors of the society, primarily in the education sector.

Purpose of the Study

This study explored on the lived experience of university nurse educators as they transition from the online learning to face-to-face classes.

Research Questions

1. What are your experiences in transitioning from online learning to face-to-face classes?
2. How was your journey of coping and overcoming the met challenges and situational transitions?

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The following related literatures discussed in this section of the paper is in relation to the emergent themes from the responses of the participants in the study.

The Reimagined Education

From across the globe, the landscape of education has shifted monumentally with the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic. Although it may seem that we have already emerged from the perils of the pandemic, at least for the moment, and as life returns to the normal little by little, there should be a great attention that is put in place with the transition back to face-to-face education and its corresponding implications (Stoian, Farcasiu, Dragomovir & Gherhes, 2022). The United Nations (UN) has recommended the 'reimagined education' as a form of teaching-learning landscape post-pandemically. With the COVID-19 still in place, the world has created a living environment wherein people across the globe are living in co-existence with this global pandemic. Hargreaves (2020) pointed out that the online learning is a temporary phase and will move back towards the previous type of learning modality which is the traditional face-to-face class (Rashid & Yaday, 2020). With the onset of online learning during the pandemic, it created a more responsive form of learning modality that employs the use of online learning along side the traditional face-to-face class in which many countries have adopted and see the relevance of the hybrid form of learning.

Moving into the New Normal

The COVID-19 pandemic had an unprecedented impact on educational institutions which required the rethinking and reframing of the teaching strategy and modality and a reconceptualization of the teaching-learning assessment activities (Stoian, Farcasiu, Dragomovir & Gherhes, 2022). It was evident from the experiences of the participants the process of change and adjustment that they went through during the pandemic and another process in resurfacing post-pandemically into the new normal. With the emergence

into the new normal, Milicevic, et al (2021) and Sanchez-Cruzado, et al (2021) pointed out that the importance of the role of virtual platform in education that was being carried out during the pandemic, which offered numerous solutions and alternatives of educational pedagogies for both the students and the teachers to lead to effective learning (Muthuprasad, Aiswarya, Aditya & Jha, 2021; Khalil, Mansour & Fadda, 2020; Wilcha, 2020).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study utilized the phenomenology design, specifically Hermeneutic phenomenology. Phenomenology is a philosophy, a methodology or an approach to study or research. In principle, phenomenology focuses on peoples' perceptions of the world of the perception of the 'things in their appearing' (Langridge, 2007). In hermeneutic phenomenology one has approaches that recommend to the research of the researcher to interpret the meanings found in relation to phenomena. The focus is on understanding the meaning and experience by searching for themes, engaging with the data interpretively, with less emphasis on the essences that are important to descriptive phenomenology. Interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) was utilized to analyze the responses of the participants in relation to their respective lived experiences. Interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) is a qualitative approach which aims to provide detailed examinations of personal lived experience which has three primary theoretical underpinning, namely, (1) as a philosophical approach initially initiated by Edmund Husserl; (2) as an interpretative endeavor because humans are sense-making organisms; and, (3) IPA is idiographic in its commitment to examining the detailed experience of each case in turn, prior to the move to more general claims (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009).

This study utilized in-depth interview of the participants to elicit the essential information which is relevant to their experiences in relation to the phenomenon being studied. There were 10 participants who participated in the study, given the following inclusion criteria: an educator in a state university currently employed to the college of nursing, has employed online learning class during the Covid-19 pandemic, teaching both theoretical and clinical / skills -related activities.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

There were 10 participants who were involved in the study in relation to the inclusion criteria set. After the extraction of significant statements and analyzing it, three relevant themes emerged. These emerging themes were: (1) **The Emerging Struggles**, with four subthemes, *Exerting a lot of efforts*, *Adjusting to the new environment*, *Being unprepared of the change* and *Staying connected*; (2) **The Actualizing Anticipation**, with four subthemes, *Experiencing the gradual transition*, *Anticipating the uncertainties*, *Being accustomed to working at home*, *Looking forward for the outcome*, and, (3) **The Resurfacing Contentment**, with four subthemes, *Reinforcing the new learning*, *Providing learning opportunities*, *Feeling a sense of contentment*, and *Being an Educator version 2.0*. Each of the emergent themes is defined and discussed with excerpts from the transcript used to support and highlight each theme.

Theme 1. The Emerging Struggles

The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic has caused a multitude of concerns from all individuals. With it as something novel, there is increased apprehensions and situational anxieties that arise from the experiences of individuals from all across the globe. In the education sector, both learners and educators and even the administrators experienced a series of struggles and challenges that affected the delivery of quality education in a modified manner. Alternative learning modalities were employed in response to the need to continue the delivery of teaching-learning despite the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. In the course of time, we are now transitioning into the new normal in which there is the shift from the online learning into

the face-to-face delivery of learning.

Subtheme 1. Exerting a lot of efforts

It was very evident that to meet the learning needs of the students, the participants exerted a lot of effort to accommodate the needs and considerations among its learners who were also adjusting to transition to face-to-face classes. The transition into online learning is a phase that affected primarily the educators who are encouraged to shift their mode of delivery in teaching. These are the events that took place in the first phase of the pandemic.

The participants were generous enough to share the what they did to accommodate the considerations of their respective students, as shown from the responses of the participants:

In our university, we had a gradual transition from the online learning class to the face-to-face class. In fact, we have tried for two terms, two weeks face-to-face and the rest of the weeks is online. (P1)

We also want to give our students our chance to have a gradual transition because many of them are actually working, while they are studying because these are the opportunities given to them by the pandemic. (P3)

The nurse educators like any other educators continually serve as the persons in the frontline with the efforts towards the continuity of learning on the onset of the pandemic. There was a clear effort that they exerted their best to deliver education in the most possible way (Villar, Filipinas, Villanueva & Cabello, 2022).

Subtheme 2. Adjusting to the new environment

Like any other individuals, the coming into the new normal entails a phase of adjustment to all individuals. As the education sectors open its doors to the possibilities of the new normal, there are so many changes and shifts that occurred that influenced the approaches in implementing teaching-learning in the new normal.

As experienced by the participants, they shared as to how they gradually adjusted to going into the gradual face-to-face classes:

On the second term, we implemented 4 weeks of the face-to-face class that is to get the ambiance of the new environment of the new normal at the same time also is to assimilate ourselves since we are being used to the online delivery, both synchronous and asynchronous in the pandemic as well as the students. (P2)

The way we conduct classes because the students are not yet used to the face-to-face, you yourself is not used to anymore in the conduct of face-to-face classes, and you need to adjust your effort, because the face-to-face class takes a lot of physical effort on your part. I think these are the transition that I have experienced. (P7)

The Covid-19 pandemic created a shift in the learning landscape. With its adaptation in the peak of its occurrence, there was a shift into online learning modality. As the world is now coming out of this untoward circumstance, there was an accommodation to the new normal form of learning which leads to a hybrid form of learning, a synergy of the online learning and the new normal face-to-face learning.

Subtheme 3. Being unprepared of the change

From the point-of-view of the educators, the implementation of designing and teaching a hybrid course for

the first time is a challenge, with consideration to time to redesign the course (Napier, Dekhane & Smith, 2011). As experienced by the participants, there are some challenges that they went through with the pandemic being in place:

Looking back with the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic, it has left us unprepared of the sudden shutdown of the world. As an educator who was in full-scale implementation of class, it was something that I was not expecting to happen. We are made to take a halt without even planning out what better measures to take. I was really anxious and at the same time unprepared. (P4)

Subtheme 4. Staying Connected

The use of technology has been paramount during the time of the pandemic. Navigating into several online platforms helped both educators and learners engaged in teaching-learning activities. At some point, mishaps occur in relation to effective and sustained connectivity that keeps both educators and learners connected during the conduct of synchronous classes.

As shared by a participant, the problems with internet connection is a major consideration in the conduct of interactive online classes.

First thing I have a problem with is the internet connection, there were episodes of intermittent connection. There are moments that I am having a hard time staying connected during synchronous classes, but I have to keep up with it. (P3)

Theme 2. The Actualizing Anticipation

In spite of the COVID-19 pandemic, educators have a major responsibility and the social obligation to take deliberate action and make sure that all students continually receive an excellent, inclusive and equitable education (Sabowala & Manghirmalani Mishra, 2021). The onset of the pandemic has led educators and administrators to revolutionized the teaching-learning modalities in anticipation of the challenges that both the learners and the educators go through.

Subtheme 1. Experiencing the Gradual Transition

The transition experienced by both the learners and the educators in moving to the new normal is like opening the cage where we are being enclosed in the onset of the pandemic. As the world eases its protocols and as the world opens again, the transition the is being hoped after the pandemic is gradually being experienced.

As shared by some of the participants, they understood that the gradual transition is not just about the learning modalities but also of the students as they navigate their way outside the walls of the pandemic and into the open space of the world.

We also want to give our students our chance to have a gradual transition because many of them are actually working, while they are studying because these are the opportunities given to them by the pandemic. (P6)

Subtheme 2. Anticipating the uncertainties

The pandemic was in place for quite some time, it lasted for more than a year. Being in this global crisis,

the world was in a major turndown, that it affected all sectors in the society. The education sector has been affected greatly with this global crisis and has caused a shift in its teaching-learning modalities in response to continually providing quality education to the students. This shift brought about by the pandemic has led these educators to be working from home, and with the uncertainty of when will the pandemic to end, it is infinite.

Some of the participants shared that they are not assured as to when the pandemic will end and that when will they be going back to teach in school face-to-face, thus, they acknowledge the reality of staying in their own home, delivering teaching-learning activities to students:

At first it is quite difficult, because I was also used to the online learning platform being situated with our own homes. But, with the gradual transition I also prompted myself of this shift. It was anticipated but I never see this coming this soon. (P2)

Subtheme 3. Being accustomed to working at home

When the COVID-19 pandemic hit the entire world, it affected the lives of all people. It caused a change in the way people work, and to some extent, more and more people choose to work from home (WFH) (Chen, 2021).

So, from my end yes [chuckles], I have become accustomed to working at home where you don't have to struggle with the traffic and of course the preparation before going and coming back home again so that would somehow affected my coping [laughing] or my experience of transitioning from online to face-to-face. (P1)

Subtheme 4. Looking forward for the outcome

Regardless of how the nurse educator prepare for the learning opportunities, considering that it is an online learning platform in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, there are some things that are way beyond the control of the educator. There are those who teach a subject with important and relevant skills and procedures that is can be taught theoretically, but needs to be done in a face-to-face setting.

There are some participants who really expressed the anticipated difficulties that they will encounter with the subjects that they are teaching:

Our concepts that we are handling requires the application of skills. Considering the online learning platform, I find it very difficult to assimilate the practice of skills because most of the skills is better appreciated if done on a face-to-face basis. (P5)

With this, the educator understands the impact of this modified learning approach since there are aspects of the learning that is better understood if performed in actual so that students will be able to appreciate fully of what is being taught. Villar, Filipinas, Villanueva & Cabello (2022) pointed out that with the effort to collaborate between the educational and community sectors significantly influence the progress as experienced by some learners when reopening of class was realized and the resumption of face-to-face classes is done.

Theme 3. The Resurfacing Contentment

In the wake of the pandemic, most learning institutions of higher education have had to reconsider ways of teaching and assessment (Garcia-Peñalvo, Corell & Abella-Garci, 2021). In the course of time, it led the

educators to thrive in the situation where the Covid-19 protocols were already in place.

Subtheme 1. Reinforcing the new learning

With the coming out from the shadows of the Covid-19 pandemic, the educators bring forth a new sense of contentment to the impact of the new normal to the delivery of teaching-learning post-pandemically, with emphasis on the new learning that surfaces from the experience of the pandemic.

Well, in my experience it has been challenging though I was able to adapt since I adapted a blended teaching-learning approach. (P3)

There were days where I hold online classes, there were days in my subjects where I conducted face-to-face classes with students. Overall, I have already adjusted and the performance of the students was also great, especially in my subject wherein we need to do skills lab before going into related learning experience. (P2)

Subtheme 2. Providing learning opportunities

The resumption to face-to-face classes serves as an opportunity to further enhance the learnings of the student primarily to those concepts which entails skill-related components. This provides an avenue for the learners to appreciate more the theoretical learning the acquire during the conduct of online learning interactive-discussions.

Some of the participants share the same experience as they shared their experience that the resumption to face-to-face classes enhances the understanding, eagerness to learn and the comprehension among the students.

With the gradual resumption of the face-to-face classes, it gave me an opportunity to maximize the learning opportunities of the students most especially those activities that are skills-related or procedural in nature. (P7)

It was really good to see the students in face-to-face classes, seeing them looking for more learning opportunities to enhance their learning the eagerness in their faces to put their learnings online into actual practice. (P2)

Subtheme 3. Feeling a sense of contentment

The educators who went through the modifications in the education landscape related to the pandemic developed a more insightful sense of contentment validating their own experiences in preparing, implementing and evaluating their response to the pandemic in relation to promoting a continued quality education to its learners.

Overall, I have already adjusted and the performance of the students of the students was also great, especially in my subject wherein we need to do skills lab before going into related learning experience. (P4)

I feel much relieved, and now I am now satisfied with performance of my students, especially that I am the level coordinator of level 4. So, I feel satisfied and contented that before they graduate, I am really sure that they learned something than merely obtaining scores, wherein I am not sure whether these are really translated into skills and competencies which a nurse should possess. (P4)

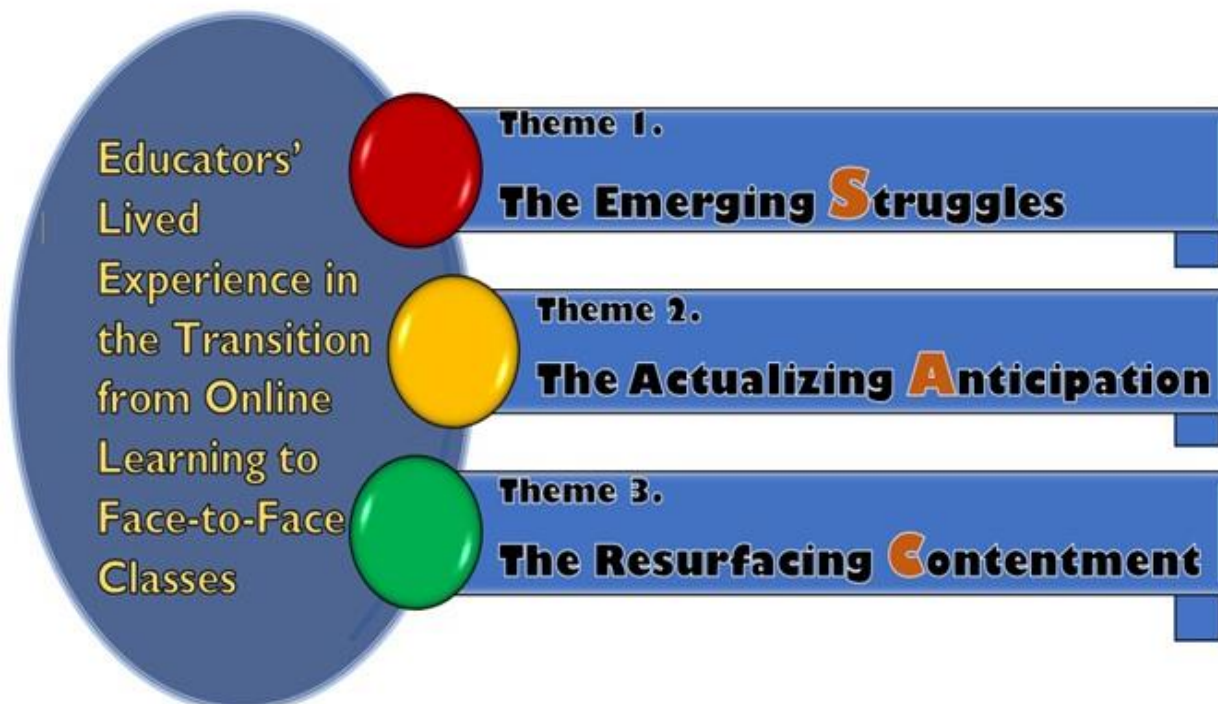
Subtheme 4. Being an Educator version 2.0

Having to go through the process of delivering quality teaching-learning opportunities during the onset of the pandemic entails great reframing in the design of education. With the pandemic waning, educators emerged as a ‘modern heroes’ able to overcome the obstacles that was experience in the prime moments of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Having to go through the pandemic, being an educator in the time of the pandemic, it made me realize that I am a modern hero having to make it through all the obstacles and challenges in delivering quality education to our students. I believe that having to thrive in these challenging times, I was able to become a better version of an educator that I can be. (P5)

It was very rewarding to know that my students were very much appreciative of my efforts in delivering my lessons, considering the limitations of the materials, I was able to enhance my skill in being resourceful and creative. (P3)

Emerging as a process of coping and transitioning, the SAC process resembles the ‘Traffic Light’ phenomenon in which the ‘Struggles’ is a point to stop; ‘Anticipation’ is a point of caution; and, ‘Contentment’ is a point to go. Looking into the experiences of the participants, it can be seen that with the onset of COVID-19, all of them experienced struggles in all forms, most especially on how they will actively deliver their teaching-learning instructions to the students. It was reflective from the participants that this transition from onsite to online learning was a shift that they did not fully expect of. Same experience of struggle emerged as these educators This resemblance illuminates the phenomenon of transitioning to the new normal among nurse educators, as shown in the figure below:



The educators went through Struggles, Anticipation and Contentment (SAC) process of coping and transitioning as they disembark from the online learning delivery platform to face-to-face class in the course of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Figure 1. The SAC Process of Coping and Transitioning among University Educators

Embarking from the experiences of nurse educators, they went through Struggles, Anticipation and Contentment (SAC) process of coping and transitioning as they disembark from the online learning delivery system platform to a face-to-face class in the course of the COVID-19 pandemic. This post-pandemic shift is a movement into the new normal which highlights the importance of having a ‘reimagined education’ and as a way forward in navigating towards a modified landscape in the new normal.

As seen in the model, the three phases of the SAC are inspired from the concept of the traffic light. The first phase of the Emerging Struggles is indicated by a red color of the traffic light which means to stop. It was in this period of the onset of the Covid-19 that everything in world is put to a stop because of the risk to life that this global pandemic has caused. As for those in learning institutions, it indicated for a temporary halt to all regular classes and the need for remediation in order to continue delivering quality education to students. In the second phase of the Actualizing Anticipation in indicated by the color yellow which reminds us that with the Covid-19 in place, we need to take extra caution with our health, our families, the people around us, and basically, ourselves on how to navigate our way through this untoward circumstance that affected all people from across the globe. Lastly, in the phase of the Resurfacing Contentment brings these university nurse educators on the new reality after going through the struggles of the Covid-19 pandemic and how do we help ourselves in the transition that takes place after all the restrictions has been set and a new and more responsive landscape of the learning process is being adopted. Totally, the SAC Model is formed as a “key” which tells us that as university educators, we will always find ways of opening doors of opportunities wherein we can continue the teaching-learning process amidst both expected and unexpected adversities that will greatly influence our ways of effectively teaching and educating our students to continually learn despite these unforeseen circumstances.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The educators went through Struggles, Anticipation and Contentment (SAC) Process of coping and transitioning s they disembark from the online learning delivery platform to face-to-face class in the emerging into a new normal with the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic. This process is reflective of the insightful and meaningful journey of educators that helped in reshaping their perspective as they continue in the delivery of quality and effective teaching-learning to their students in the new normal. This study shed light on how nurse educators transitioned its teaching into the new normal. There was an exploration of the experiences of the participants and help us better understand the process that they went through to continually deliver quality education to the learners despite the modified ways and approached in teaching in the new normal. With this, it is recommended that a study will be conducted further as to how nurse educators continue to implement blended learning as a form of alternative learning modality that is set in place with the occurrence of another pandemic or the need for a major shift in the teaching-learning delivery. Looking into the experiences of both the students and the administrators will be a different perspective on how they are able to navigate their way into the new normal, as this is the learning landscape of the present times after the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.

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