Educating Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Learners (CLD) in United States Schools during COVID-19

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Abstract

The COVID-19 pandemic has propelled educational communities across the world into emergency remote models of instruction. This study documented the perceptions of 11 teachers from the State of Illinois regarding the quality of online instruction in their schools and their unexpected challenges from March of 2019-2020 academic year. Three points of data collection documented the teachers' perceptions of the transition to online learning and subsequent difficulties. Recurrent themes evident in responses to interview questions (Stake, 2000) were examined using a constant comparison method (Glasser & Strauss, 1967). Three emerging themes were identified: increased job demands, need for educational supports, and educators' concerns about the quality of the delivery of online instruction for Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Learners during the pandemic.

Keywords: COVID-19, online teaching and learning, educational supports, quality instruction for CLD learners

When the seriousness of COVID-19 became evident in Spring 2020 (World Health, n.d.), more than 188 countries closed K-12 schools to contain the spread of the virus (OECD, 2020). As did many countries, the United States (U.S.) decided to move to online instruction. In the State of Illinois, the governor issued a stay-at-home mandate on March 13, 2020

(Foody, 2020) and the next week schooling was moved to online platforms. The effects of the pandemic on schooling were sudden and unprecedented (Joshi, Kong, Nykamp, & Fynewever , 2018). Educators were not prepared for the demands of the online classroom and the digital challenges that it posed for students, teachers, and families with children (Ching, Hsu, & Baldwin, 2018; Harris, Kolodner, & Morton, 2020; Kali, Goodyear, & Markauskaite, 2011). This study documented the perceptions of 11 teachers of culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) learners from the State of Illinois regarding their experiences moving to online instruction and their perceptions of the quality of the online instruction they delivered from March of the 2019-2020 academic year. Three points of data collection documented the teachers' perceptions of the successes and challenges they experienced during the transition to online learning. The recurrent themes from the interview responses (Stake, 2000) examined through constant comparison (Glasser & Strauss, 1967) documented the teachers' concerns and unexpected challenges teaching CLD learners online.

Background

According to the OECD/Harvard survey, 36 countries indicated that their main focus during the pandemic was to ensure the continuity of the academic learning of students, while accepting limitations in other areas such as addressing the social emotional needs of students, improving the quality of educational supports available for disadvantaged students, and providing supports for parents with limited command of the language of instruction (OECD, 2020). The pandemic forced teachers to experiment with using new platforms to facilitate meaningful online learning (Graves & Bowers, 2018; Rapanta, Botturi, Goodyear, Guàrdia, & Koole, 2020). While there is a growing body of research that informs best practices for online learning, this research is largely unknown to the K-12 teaching community (Barbour, 2019).

In the United States (U.S.), teachers were surprised by no longer having a classroom in a school building and some did not have a fast internet connection in their homes. Some were unable to return to their schools to gather teaching materials to use for online instruction after the schools were closed. The teachers confronted increased workloads and technological disproportions in their communities (Houlden & Veletsianos 2020; Houston, Meyer, & Paewai, 2006). They questioned their expertise as they made efforts to navigate unfamiliar technology with limited technical support from their school districts (Hodge, 2020). They strove to be creative while telling themselves they could indeed develop new pedagogies and balance the gaps in the learners' digital divide (Foulger, Graziano, Schmidt-Crawford, & Slykhuis, 2017; Trust & Whalen, 2020).

The digital divide was defined as the gap between families who had access to internet technology and those who did not (Van Dijk, 2006). The Center for Democracy and Technology (2021) documented that in the U.S. alone, tens of millions of citizens do not have access to broadband. Salinas (2020) reported that about 40 percent of Hispanic households did not have broadband or any form of access to the internet in their homes. This lack of access to the internet added stress to the lives of culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) students who were being asked to join online lessons without up-to-date technology.

When Vygotsky (1978) discussed the goals of schooling within the politics of culture, he contended that liberating practices are essential to validate the affective and academic needs of all learners. Teachers across the world's continents who believe in liberatory learning, are not satisfied until all students are supported to develop their thoughts and express their opinions as meritorious citizens of their nation (Darder, 1998; Hawkins & Norton, 2009). The reality during the pandemic

was that students' access to technology and their digital competency delimited their academic access and communications with teachers. At the same time educators were worried about how their competency and instructional effectiveness online would be evaluated (Bowyer, 2017; Garrison & Kanuka, 2004). The pandemic perhaps replicated systemic beliefs that the haves, meaning learners affording access to technology, deserved the rights of citizenship more than have nots. Students with intermittent to zero access to the internet were at a disadvantage because the system did not take the needed steps to ensure their rights to an equitable education. Teachers worried about their ability to cover the grade level curriculum given all the stressors that interfered with students' class participation. Before the pandemic, students had been privy to high levels of teacher-student and student-student interaction in face-to-face traditional school settings, but teachers with students who could not fully participate in online classrooms struggled to transform the standard curriculum for the online environment.

Culturally Responsive Instruction

Research conducted by Jagers, Rivas-Drake, & Williams (2019) highlighted educators' need to explore how the emotional state of learners from CLD backgrounds affects academic achievement, arguing that a socio-emotional learning (SEL) focus offers an instructional foundation for developing students' socio-emotional competencies. The work of the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) documents that SEL helps learners develop foundational skills for positive health practices, engaged citizenship, and school success (CASEL, 2021). Similarly, culturally responsive instruction (CRI) allows teachers to create classroom environments in which the curriculum addresses issues of privilege, discrimination, social justice, and support the self-determination CLD learners need to bridge societal and educational inequalities (Daniel et al., 2016; Gay, 2018). Dewaele and Lee (2020), Meskill, Nilsen, and Oliveira (2019) and Ruiz (1984) argued that SEL strategies support second language acquisition, which should be part of instruction for teachers to validate the languages and rights of all students at the same time educators use instructional methods that research suggests effective for CLD learners. The move to online learning posed challenges because it required teachers to use pedagogies that differed from the teaching methods they had found effective for CLD students in standard classrooms. Educators needed skills that differed from those used for groups of monolingual students because teaching CLD learners requires a conscious focus on supporting the development of multiliteracy (García et al, 2021).

Caring educators ensure students feel valued, respected, and model SEL principles in the curriculum, aiming to increase academic engagement (Gay, 2018; McCaughtry, 2004). They work to ensure that no learner feels as *the other* (Bourdieu, 1991). Before they design CRI, teachers investigate learners' backgrounds and communities to uncover students' schooled and non-schooled funds of knowledge (FOK) (Gonzalez et al., 2005). Beyond their commitment to exploring the FOK of their student populations, future and practicing educators of CLD learners strive to provide students with opportunities in the classroom that situate them as their own power brokers (Fasching Varner et al., 2019). They validate the uniqueness of all learners' cultural capital and diverse identities (Coney, 2016; Aliakbari & Faraji, 2011).

Online Teaching and Learning

Recent studies suggest that the COVID-19 pandemic intensified educational inequity among students from different socioeconomic backgrounds, especially those from lower income households who had less access to technology, as the transition to online learning decreased school

supports and resources (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2020). The level of access to information and communication technologies varied greatly depending on the country due to the limitation of available resources (OECD, 2020). In some countries cell phones are readily available and while students can afford internet connectivity, the cost of computers and tablets is out of reach. The pandemic also sharpened the disparities related to race, gender, class, and other dimensions of individual and group identity as well as the disparities in the SEL support and differing levels of technology access across students affecting learners' SEL skills which rely heavily on active forms of rehearsal and collaboration that difficult to replicate in distance education (Cavanaugh et al., 2004). SEL has been suggested to promote optimal developmental outcomes for CLD learners regardless of their socio-cultural and economic backgrounds (Jagers et al, 2019; Yoder et al., 2020) but addressing SEL is at the embryonic stage in many nations Cooperative learning for SEL tasks have been documented to increase student engagement, but during the pandemic teachers were unsure of how to use these to nurture relationships in distance-learning environments (Robyler & Wiencke, 2003).

The term FOK has been used to describe teachers' informal knowledge gathered through teaching experiences and understandings (Hammersley, 2005). Hedges (2012) found that some theories that teachers learn in courses and professional development (PD) are filtered through their informal knowledge. Kennedy (1997) documented that teachers' practices have been identified with their pre-training beliefs and ideologies. Teachers' informal deeply ingrained knowledge is likely to be the first knowledge drawn upon in the creation of spontaneous curricular and pedagogical decision making (Hedges, 2012). Therefore, the rapid move to online teaching during Covid-19 may have caused teachers to draw more deeply on their informal FOK rather than rely on research-based practices.

Online Social Presence for CLD Students

The definition of social presence in a classroom has been debated for years; however, for the purposes of this review we consider social presence to be the extent to which students feel that they are members of the school community. Whereas face-to-face interactions were the preferred method to establish social presence in schools prior to COVID-19, the overnight move to online instruction decreased traditional ways of developing social presence among students. Although social presence is important in all learning environments, it has been suggested to be a stronger predictor of success in online than in face-to-face settings (Hostetter & Busch, 2006; Jung et al., 2002; Picciano, 2002; Tu & Mclsaac, 2002). Cheung et al. (2011) concluded that social presence is a critical factor in determining students' usage of online platforms. Research conducted by Myunghee et. al. (2012) showed that collaborative learning opportunities increase a sense of community among online learners. Without social presence, students are unable to connect with other students to meet their online social needs, so earners tend to drop out of courses because they find the environments impersonal (OECD). Students from vulnerable groups struggle with social presence due to the lack of quiet space to participate in educational activities (OECD, 2020)

Social presence is important to CLD students from high context cultures (Hall, 1959) because they often rely on group association for identity development. Without the development of social presence in online study, high-context CLD students are more likely to experience transitional trauma as they attempt to adjust to online learning. However, Short et al. (1976) emphasized that multiple factors can often influence students' requirements for online social presence such as the type of online platform, the style of communication of the individual and the characteristics of the

community to which they identify. Myunghee et al. (2012) showed that collaborative learning opportunities increase a sense of community among online learners.

Online Interaction for CLD students

Typically, students experience a high level of teacher-student and student-student interaction in face-to-face traditional school settings. OECD (2020) found that access for digital learning activities were limited in Colombia due to learners' limited access to the Internet. Kwon and Danaher (2000) found that Korean students perceived electronic communications as impersonal and even impolite, which seemed to hinder their online communications. Frustrations were increased by the often-rapid pace of communications as well as the knowledge that online discussions were publicly viewed. Students worried that misunderstandings could occur due to the absence of emotion and physical cues. Wang found that Chinese as well as Korean students preferred delayed-time discussions over same-time discussions. Yu et. al. (2005) discovered that Chinese students who grew up in non-interactive learning environments found the asynchronous format to be the most productive and comfortable learning platform. He and Yu (2005) reported that very few of the Korean and Chinese students utilized the online cooperative group work; they preferred the individual competitive model. Clearly, educators might conclude that students' cultural backgrounds greatly influence their reaction to and perception of their ability to succeed in online learning platforms.

Online Collaboration with CLD students

Educators know that success for diverse learners is influenced by the classroom environment, teachers' attitudes and methods, and how the learners see their families' cultural norms and histories reflected and validated by teachers' curricular choices and classroom conversations (Gay, 2010, 2018; Krashen, 1982; Ladson-Billings, 2006; Paris & Alim, 2017; San Pedro, 2018; Szelei et al., 2019). Even before the COVID-19 pandemic, research suggested that social and emotional competencies (SECs) comprise foundational skills that result in positive health practices, engaged citizenship, and students' academic success. Teachers struggle to identify the most effective SEL strategies to support students' SECs in online collaboration (Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL, 2021; Kendziora & Yoder, 2017). Learners' SECs require nurturing regardless of the medium of instruction (Bridgeland et al., 2013, Durlak et al., 2011; Roffey, 2017; Schonert-Reichl, Kitil & Hanson-Peterson, 2017).

Although online learning is different from that which occurs in a brick-and-mortar classroom, Woodley et al. (2017) suggest that identifying each student's comfort level with technology in the beginning of an online experience allows teachers to create a plan to better meet all students' learning needs. Students bring a plethora of funds of knowledge to every learning experience (Gay, 2010; Gonzalez et al., 2005), including online learning, which challenges teachers to examine how students' funds of knowledge is a factor in the choice of technology. Kumi-Yeboah et al. (2020) propose that social media networks allow students to learn collaboratively when proper feedback is given and when teachers provide opportunities to exchange ideas.

While educators learn methods for teaching CLD learners in their teacher preparation programs such as the benefits of in small group work, insufficient focus has been placed on the skills that educators need to teach online collaboration that supports SEL and the development of SECs (Angeli & Valanides, 2005; Ching et al., 2018; Graves & Bowers, 2018; Kali et al., 2011; Rapanta et al., 2020). In an online world, teachers' ability to monitor student progress is limited to what they see on the screen and hear through the microphone, and students may not feel they have the

same level of access to the teacher when asking questions through a computer. While methods used for teaching and learning may be theoretically alike in face-to-face and online mediums, teachers' instructions for students about assignments requires adjustments to ensure guidelines provided are clear and to allow for unexpected issues with internet connections and to engage students to execute tasks independently and collaboratively with classmates.

Research Questions

The collected data via a series of interviews sought to answer two research questions:

> (1) What were teachers' expressed concerns regarding teaching online?

> (2) What were teachers' unexpected challenges teaching CLD students online?

Methodology

This ethnographic case study explored (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019) teachers' perceptions of and experiences with teaching culturally and linguistically diverse learners online during COVID19. This study investigated participants perceptions of the transition to teaching online during the pandemic. The teachers had completed six post-graduate level courses focused on working with CLD learners and were therefore considered competent to work with CLD students.. The courses they had completed addressed cultural and linguistic concerns in instructional design, ways to reach out to develop relationships with students' family networks to incorporate diverse cultural norms in lessons that support the academic environment of schools, and the ability to design summative and formative evaluations that are not dependent on English language proficiency. Three points of qualitative data collection were conducted. Initial data collection began March 2020 when the teachers had just transitioned to online learning, the second point of data collection was November 2020, and the final data collection was in May 2021.

Participants and setting

A total of 11 participants (one K-1, one fourth-grade, five fifth-grade, two sixth-grade, and two high school teachers) from K-12 public schools were part of the study. The participants represented two public school districts in the northern Illinois region of the U.S. Their teaching experience ranged from 1 to 32 years. Of the 11 participants, one held a bachelor's degree, eight held a master's in education, and two had a doctorate. The participants taught at schools with high numbers of CLD students whose primary language was Spanish (average of 58.6%), with an average of 64% low-income students and an average of 30% English language learners across the schools.

Before the research started, the researchers obtained IRB approval to comply with human subjects research protocols. A purposeful sampling was implemented utilizing a snowball technique to select the teachers for this study (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019). Because of the close connections among teachers, the researchers asked the participants to recommend colleagues to be invited to participate in the study.

Data Collection

The qualitative data were collected in three stages. The first data collection consisted of audiotaped one-hour phone interviews that were transcribed for later examination. The second and third data collections were performed utilizing Qualtrics[XM] to accommodate the participants' request for more time to think about the questions. Demographic data such as grade level taught, years of

teaching experience, education level, and population served, were gathered but not included in Table 1. Data were analyzed utilizing a constant comparison technique. This technique is an iterative process that allows comparison of existing data to new emerging data and permits categorization of codes and themes based on the significance of the data (Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

The participants responded to questions related to the instructional challenges and opportunities of online teaching and learning, technology limitations and access issues, PD, and school leaders' provision of resources (Appendix 1). The teachers discussed their views on the mandatory transition to teaching online due to the pandemic. They also explained the take-aways from the entire experience at the times of data collection.

Results

A constant comparison protocol (Glasser & Strauss, 1967) led to two emerging codes: (1) job demands with following sub-codes: responsibilities, preparation to teach online, and curriculum delivery and (2) educational supports as it is reflected in teachers' conceptions of quality instruction for CLD learners.

Job demands

Job demands referred to teachers' workload, preparation time, and curriculum delivery (Tuxford & Graham, 2014). The participants provided information about their journey in the transition to online learning. Many were overwhelmed at the beginning of the pandemic, but as time passed, they felt more comfortable teaching online as they adjusted to and developed new methods for communicating with students during instruction.

Teachers indicated their responsibilities increased due to the training needed to move to online learning, time needed to communicate with parents, and development of materials. Regarding PD, eight teachers stated in March 2020 that they did not have any preparation to teach online. By November 2020, six teachers indicated the PD provided by their schools was not enough or was limited; for example,

- *Never got any. It was pretty much learn on your own or sink.*

- *There are hours of tutorials/PD that we can go back and re-watch. Mostly, it just takes practice, practice, practice!*

- *8 hours [of PD] sounds like a lot, but I've spent a lot more of my own time trying to learn more.*

By May 2021, the teachers' responses indicated they had gained the skills needed to teach online:

- *I have mastered online teaching. I feel much more confident and my students are showing success.*

- *I feel I have way more knowledge now than I did in March of 2020," and "I know so much more.*

Regarding <u>preparation to teach time</u>, the teachers mentioned that development of lesson plans, educational activities, and tailoring homework or class activities based on students' technology literacy took additional time. They indicated that curricular design had to be rethought because students did not "have manipulatives, anchor charts, and other tools" as they would in the face-to-

face classroom. An issue that concerned the teachers was the students' level of technology literacy. A teacher explained that

- *students would be good using specific technology; however, they [students] do not understand why we [teachers] are asking them to do certain activities or the reasons why it is important to learn to use a particular app*

The teachers indicated some students did not want to learn to use apps for select assignments and "they did not complete those tasks." The students' unwillingness to familiarize themselves with new technology impacted their ability to expand their knowledge.

- *As a teacher I don't know how to teach motivation to a student but I can encourage him/her.*

Other teachers indicated that

- *My students required help with logging into the apps we had not used at school.*
- *There were also difficulties due to a lack of access to wifi.*
- *They [students] know gaming and social media, but not educational platforms unless they're directly taught.*

By November 2020, one teacher expressed that

- *some of my students still have difficulties accessing the technology*

while the rest of participants indicated that

- *they [students] are doing much better.*
- *there are still a handful of students who struggle with following verbal directions.*
- *ONLY a few still struggle, like 2 out of 21.*

One teacher offered a story:

- *I am fortunate to teach an upper elementary grade. Fifth graders are able to do a lot with technology. We spent a lot of time in the beginning, but now we are able to spend more time with content than how to use technology.*

Regarding curriculum delivery, the participants explained the difficulty of teaching bilingual students online when teachers' resources were in the classroom and they could not access them in March 2020. All the teachers mentioned that teaching CLD students was "difficult online" due to the limited resources and materials available, which led them to reconsider teaching strategies. One teacher indicated:

- *I had 3 students who spoke predominantly Spanish, the learning packets that they [students] received were all in English.*
- *Most curriculum that was provided was at grade level, and many of my students were not even close to reading at grade level and families did not have the resources or knowledge to assist their children in successful learning.*

By November 2020, the teachers expressed that teaching online was "much harder" because face-to-face instruction provides nuances in the body language that help teachers support students. Another teacher indicated:

- *I can't read their body language or facial expressions (because they don't have their cameras on).*

- *For one thing, the classes are extremely diverse. We have kids who are confident and eagerly participate in class with quiet and shy bilingual students who lack the confidence to participate in the online setting.*

- *In a face-to-face classroom my students can look around the room at helpful anchor charts and use printed materials to reference while I teach.*

These comments suggested the teachers perceived online learning was not as efficient as in-person teaching, leaving CLD learners at a disadvantage if "the students have to take charge of their learning in the online setting." Although the participants' answers by May 2021 indicated they felt proficient delivering educational content online, their comments about the efficiency of online learning compared to in-person continued:

- *They [CLD students] need more language support," "In face-to-face, I know whether my students are paying attention and engaging.*

- *In a classroom LOTS of conversations can happen simultaneously. CLD learners need this. Online only one voice can be heard at a time.*

One teacher indicated,

- *Content worked ok online but developing skills in students is harder online.*

Educational supports

Another recurrent theme was school support, which included school leadership, issues with school administration, and technology (Tuxford & Graham, 2014). Out of the 11 teachers, six felt supported by their administration during the transition from face-to-face to online learning.

- *We were supported, but not with a very good plan.*

- *I felt supported because the district provided all learning packets in hard copies for my students.*

- *I wanted to TEACH and so was initially given permission to do Zoom meetings, then told to stop. It was really frustrating.*

- *In March 2020, I felt that my district did exactly what it had to do to keep all of our staff and students safe.*

Other teachers indicated:

- *the administration was too worried about every student receiving the exact same things based on grade level rather than being equitable and providing what students needed specifically*

- *Once we started actually teaching, we came across a lot of issues that we eventually resolved, but admin [school administration] could not answer questions immediately.*

By November 2020, the teachers indicated the school leadership was supporting them; however, issues with technology were not resolved. For example, a teacher considered the biggest challenge was that

- *the district did not check the compatibility of programs with the devices the students had. Many of the things they [school administration] rolled out were laptops and all the elementary students had iPads that do not have the same functionality.*

Technology issues were present for all participants because they were providing technical support to students and parents to meet the online activities. Although the technology issues were mostly solved by May 2021, educational guidelines were missing. The teachers acknowledged the school administration complied with the superintendent's guidelines for the school year; however, moving forward there were no clear policies in place. For example,

- *The administration did not have a clear policy for students about choosing to attend either online or in person.*

- *The demand on my planning time has increased. It's as if they have decided we no longer need time during contractual hours to plan.*

- *Our [teachers] only focus was SEL and then we were reprimanded for low test scores,"* and *"there has been no real direction as to what our instruction should be focused on.*

Discussion

The ways the teachers handled demands during the pandemic revealed that although they were not prepared for online teaching, they were willing to take on the challenges of the transition. However, the school administration did not allow the teachers "to meet students where they were in their learning curve and gradually build them up to where they could be" and "Teachers were not given the professional freedom to meet the needs of their students." By March 2020, the teachers were developing optimistic attitudes about online learning.

- *It was a difficult transition because it was so abrupt and unprecedented. I have a whole new understanding of the word flexible and remote learning.*

- *Education will never be the same as it was, and I think that is for the better.*

Moreover, the teachers noticed that some students did well online, while others did well in-person and that classroom behavior was addressed more easily (such as muting students, logging students out, etc.). They also noted the importance of interaction for the students and teachers to build relationships. In May 2021, all teachers acknowledged that online teaching for CLD students was not as good as in-person because of the missing academic supports the students needed to perform academically.

Teachers' understanding of their students' FOK and students' comfort level with technology influence their instructional decisions in not only in the brick-and-mortar classroom, but also in online learning (Hammersley, 2005; Hedges, 2012; Kennedy, 1997). Teachers know the need to establish CLD students' level previous use of technology and their familiarity with different platforms. (Woodley, 2017). Administrators cannot assume that students or teachers are proficient on all types of platforms and ready to fully function in an online teaching and learning environment. There is a process for teachers and students to develop technological confidence while practicing the skills in the classroom where supports are available.

The development of social presence in online learning has been shown to be a strong predicator of achievement (Hostetter & Busch, 2006; Jung et al., 2002; Picciano, 2002; Tu & Mclaac, 2002) and is critical in preparing CLD students for success in online learning (Cheung, et al. 2011). Social

presence begins when the teacher first meets CLD learners and their families. When teachers build relationships with parents, it gives all stakeholders opportunities to ask questions and understand technology expectations. Social presence can also be developed by involving students in multiple community building activities, which will help all learners to become comfortable with their classmates and set the tone for productive group work (Myunghee, et al. 2012).

Conclusions

The rapid move to online platforms supported Woodley et al.'s (2017) findings that online learning is different than brick and mortar teaching. Reports from OECD (2020) and the U.S. Department of Education (2021) have acknowledged the equity and inadequacy issues that students and teachers experienced internationally and nationally during the pandemic Data indicated that CLD students were greatly affected by COVID-19 if they lacked the socio-affective and learning strategies they needed to help them address the issues they were confronting.

There was evidence in the teachers' responses that all stakeholders were caught off guard. The teachers felt school administrators provided no clear polices, no clear guidelines, and no real direction. The teachers were frustrated because their responsibilities increased as a result of the last-minute PD and the extra time needed to plan lessons compatible with online learning. The teachers reported that not all students had equitable access to technology, technology skills, and technological knowledge to embrace e-learning. Therefore, teachers had to provide technical support to guide students through the materials to be able to access educational materials and submit assignments. The technology added another challenge to be overcome by teachers and students that had to be solved daily.

However, in spite of the frustrations felt by the teachers, students and parents, online learning is here to stay. Given proper teacher training and technological support for teachers, CLD students and their parents, online learning has the potential for development into a powerful delivery system. Teachers and administrators need to avail themselves of the best practices for online learning to be included in the curriculum while integrating brick and mortar strategies that make sense in the online format.

Implications

This study's findings revealed implications for administrators. Teachers need help from administrators such as sending out surveys to families regarding learners' technology competencies. Moreover, school administrators could ask about the types of support(s) families might need to assist CLD students. If enough data are collected, districts could make plans to begin to decrease the digital divide (Van Dijk, 2006). In addition, online research-based practices could be infused into ongoing PD implemented by administrators; this would develop teachers' skills in developing online lessons as well as build their background and enhance their preparation for online teaching. PD offered by districts needs to be ongoing and frequent so teachers can keep up with changing demands. As teachers increase their knowledge, they will formulate more questions that lead them to identify innovative methods. . In addition, technology changes often, so continued PD will prepare teachers to master new platforms that will minimize the need for teachers to experiment (Graves & Bowers, 2018; Rapanta et al., 2020). Instead they will be able to draw on their knowledge of best practices. Multiple PD opportunities about online teaching methods could integrate current research to answer with teachers' questions and keep them abreast of new technologies.

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To Cite this Article

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Appendix 1 Interview Questions

Interview questions – March 2020

Please describe the bilingual population that you serve.
What platform (e.g., google classrooms) do you use to deliver your instruction online?
Did you feel supported by your school administration during the initial transition to online learning in March 2020? Please explain your answer.
Were there issues with your school administration during the transition to online learning in March 2020? Please explain your answer.
Did you receive enough guidance from your district to meet educational goals? Please explain your answer.
Were your knowledge, skills, and experience ready to transition to online learning in March 2020? Please explain your answer.
What type of professional development did you receive to teach online before the March 2020 transition?
How easy/difficult was it to teach bilingual students in an online environment during the transition? Consider educational materials needed to teach bilingual students.
What is your perception of students' technology literacy?
What are your takeaways from the transition?

Interview questions – November 2020 and May 2021

Did you feel supported by your school administration while teaching online? Please explain your answer.
Did you experience any issues/challenges/obstacles with the school administration while teaching online? Please explain your answer.
Did you have enough guidance from your district to meet educational goals? Please explain your answer.
Was the professional development you received sufficient to teach online? Please explain your answer.
Do you think that teaching bilingual students online is the same as teaching them face-to-face? Please explain the differences and/or challenges.
How did you spend most of your teaching time (e.g., online meetings with students, developing materials, finding materials, and figuring out the online platform) while teaching online?
How easy/difficult was it to teach bilingual students in an online environment after months of teaching online? Consider educational materials needed to teach bilingual students.
After several months of teaching online, were students' technology literacy (being able to log in, access apps, access the online learning platform, receive assignments, submitting homework, etc.) still a challenge? Please explain your answer.
After several months of teaching online, what are your take-a-ways from teaching online?
Are your knowledge, skills, and experience ready to teach online now in May 2021?