

# Malaysian Trainee Teachers' Experience at Managing Students' Learning During the Pandemic: A Leap into the 21st. Century Skills

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## ABSTRAK

**Pengenalan-** Praktikum adalah satu cabang yang penting dalam latihan keguruan yang memberikan pengalaman penglibatan kelas sebenar untuk seorang guru pelatih. Ia dianggap sebagai salah satu komponen penyediaan guru yang paling kritikal dan memberi impak terbesar terhadap kualiti guru pelatih (Mtika, 2011; Zeichner, 2010; Graham, 2006; Tang, 2003) serta pengembangan kemahiran pedagogi mereka (Kauffman, 1992). Peningkatan jangkitan Covid-19 secara mendadak di seluruh dunia pada suku pertama tahun 2020, menyaksikan penutupan sekolah secara besar-besaran bagi membendung wabak tersebut. Peristiwa yang tidak dijangka ini menjadikan kaedah pengajaran dan pembelajaran konvensional iaitu bersemuka bertukar dengan drastik kepada pembelajaran jarak-jauh yang memerlukan teknologi dan kemahiran abad ke-21.

**Objektif** – Artikel ini mengupas pengalaman sekumpulan guru pelatih di sebuah institusi pengajian tinggi di Malaysia dalam menguruskan cabaran normal baharu dalam menyampaikan pendidikan jarak-jauh menggunakan teknologi.

**Methodologi** – Data dikumpulkan daripada temubual dan catatan tambahan bertulis berbentuk rancangan pengajaran harian, artifak pengajaran dan platform dalam-talian yang digunakan untuk sesi pengajaran dan pembelajaran.

**Dapatan** – Hasil kajian menunjukkan bahawa guru-guru pelatih ini mengalami pelbagai pengalaman yang mencabar dalam memastikan kesinambungan pendidikan berasaskan kurikulum dan kemajuan pelajar dalam pembelajaran tercapai.

**Kepentingan** – Kejayaan mereka dalam melaksanakan pengajaran dan pembelajaran di tengah-tengah polemik pandemik ini melambangkan keberhasilan penghayatan ciri-ciri keguruan yang tabah dan fleksibel seperti yang diperlukan di dalam profesion ini.

**Kata Kunci:** Abad 21, Pandemik, Pengajaran dan Pembelajaran, Praktikum

## ABSTRACT

**Introduction-** Teaching practicum is an essential part of teacher-training that provides real classroom engagement for a beginner teacher. It is considered as one of the most critical components of teacher preparation with greatest impact on teacher quality (Mtika, 2011; Zeichner, 2010; Graham, 2006; Tang, 2003) and is significant for the development of their pedagogical skills (Kauffman, 1992). The sudden upsurge of the Covid -19 infections around the world in the first quarter of 2020, witnessed massive closure of schools worldwide in order to contain the spread of the pandemic. This unexpected turn of events had flipped the more traditional face-to-face method of teaching and learning into distance learning that requires 21st. Century technology and skills.

**Purpose** – This paper explores the experience of a group of trainee teachers from an institute of higher learning in Malaysia, at managing this unprecedented challenge in delivering education remotely via technology.

**Methodology** – Data were collected from interview and supplemental written records in the form of lesson plans, teaching evidence and online tools employed for the teaching and learning.

**Findings** – The findings show that the trainee teachers undergo varied and often challenging experiences in ensuring the continuity of curriculum-based education and the students' progress in learning.

**Significance** – Their successes in delivering the lessons amidst the novel encounters are the epitome of resilient and flexible teachers in the making.

**Keywords:** 21st. Century, Pandemic, Teaching and Learning, Practicum

### Introduction

Despite being a year to remember of its tremendous development and achievement, 2020 thus far, has been a year that is dominated by the Covid-19 pandemic. According to Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary (2020), pandemic is referred to “an outbreak of a disease that occurs over a wide geographic area and affects an exceptionally high proportion of the population”. This Covid-19 pandemic has made an impact on the conventional teaching and learning as well as on the responsibilities of the teachers, making it more challenging as they have to adapt to a new normal that requires teaching to be conducted online. Moreover, this new normal requires teachers not only to adapt to online teaching but also to adopt new information and skills as they have to have advanced literacy on the information technology. In other words, teachers are also required to improve their knowledge, competency and change of attitude towards online teaching and learning.

Malaysia is one of the countries in the world that is also affected by the Covid-19. Due to the increasing number of Covid-19 cases, since March 2020, the government of Malaysia decided to impose the MCO to the whole country. This action is taken by the government in order to break the virus transmission from spreading to a lot more people and finally make the situation worse. Due to MCO, schools and universities are among the institutions that are closed for

teaching and learning physically but it is now conducted online. Fry (2001) defined online learning as the use of internet and some other important technologies to develop materials for educational purposes, instructional delivery and management of programme. However, without precedent cases as a guide, the effects and changes of conducting online teaching in the time of Covid-19 pandemic is quite a handful to handle for those at schools - school principals, teachers and not to mention trainee teachers. While the conventional face to face classroom is deemed to be a great method in teaching and learning process, now with everything being conducted online, trainee teachers lose their opportunity to the real classroom engagement. This situation has resulted to a lot of challenges and to name a few - receiving good internet coverage, maintaining the trainee teachers' own motivation as well as their students' motivation.

Despite the challenges brought by online teaching, teachers have to consider ways for the dissemination of knowledge to happen. Unlike trained teachers, the purpose of teaching practicum for trainee teachers is not only limited to the dissemination of knowledge but more importantly teaching skills that should be gained through the exposure to the real classroom engagement. The skills gained from the classroom engagement during teaching practicum is very crucial for trainee teachers as a guide when they embark in teaching profession. In other words, for trainee teachers to handle online teaching during MCO are far more challenging as compared to conventional way of teaching. It is mindful that the government has offered a lot of supports including providing guidelines with regards to the implementation of online teaching, but there is a lot more to be achieved by the trainee teachers themselves. Owing to the fact that trainee teachers' primary purpose of doing teaching practicum is to gain teaching experience within a classroom setting, to grapple with the technology and online learning, is obviously another challenge to be tackled.

## **Literature Review**

Keeping up with the teaching skills of the 21st century has emerged as a significant global educational challenge (Eastern Washington University, 2018). Teachers need to be lifelong learners who embraced continuous, collaborative, self-directed, active, and proactive learning (Caena & Redecker, 2019; Crick & Wilson, 2005; Umi Kalsum, Hutkemri, Suzieleez Syrene, Abd Razak & Riyan Hidayat, 2019) because like technology, education develops so rapidly where techniques, skills, and technologies become obsolete within a short of time.

To meet the challenges of this 21st-century education, teachers need to improve their skills and instructional quality to ensure that student learning outcomes can be achieved (Chavan & Yoshikawa, 2013; Kim, Raza & Seidman, 2019; Pianta et al., 2009). Moreover, due to all negative effects of the covid-19 virus, the educational world has undergone a 360-degree transformation as the health crisis affecting nearly 1.6 billion students in 190 countries and continents has stimulated various innovation efforts from different parties, teachers, schools, and government (United Nation, 2020). COVID-19 requires not only knowledge and skills, but also teachers' confidence in online teaching success (König, Jäger-Biela & Glutsch, 2020).

The skills framework presented by Dede (2010) outlined the skills needed by teachers in the 21st century, namely critical thinking, problem-solving, creativity, metacognition, communication, digital literacy and technology, civic responsibility, and sensitivity to the global environment. Those skills are essential because they can support the capability of 21st-century learners to have self-directions and the ability to collaborate with various parties (McCoog, 2008), which is in line with the 21st-century educational scenario that promotes globalization and internationalization (Boholano, 2017).

No doubt, teachers are urged to act as agents of change to ensure that the learning process can continue while ensuring the well-being of students is not neglected (UNICEF, 2020). Therefore, to build a more resilient teacher workforce in times of crisis, all teachers should be equipped with digital and pedagogical skills (Norezan, Azzlina, Rosilawati & Siti Fairuz, 2019), amidst their initiatives to adopt online teaching and learning (Nurfardilla, Hazrati, Siti Nur Diyana & Lilia, 2020) as the online education should be made the way forward (Muhyiddin, 2020).

It is undeniable that teachers faced many difficulties in performing online teaching during covid-19, such as lack of appropriate teaching materials, technical issues, inadequate service training, time constraint, low self-confidence, students' participation, lack of parents' cooperation, poor internet facilities, and problem to track the students learning progress (Seema & Nangia, 2020). Subsequently, for trainee teachers, online teaching and learning experience had served as an indispensable role in their training program/teaching practical at schools. Few studies reported that trainee teachers found online teaching helped them to be more creative (Kim, 2020; Lin & Zheng, 2015), and also increase their self-efficacy and competence (Woodcock, Sisco & Eady, 2015).

Vice versa, a previous study by Singh (2016) found teachers were not comfortable in handling modern gadgets and technological devices, while Berge (1998) conclude that the main issues were lies in the role of the teacher, namely pedagogical, social, managerial, and technical responsibilities. The lack of interest in online teaching has also been identified as one of the problems faced by some teachers (Osika, Johnson, & Buteau, 2009), probably due to lack of visual and face-to-face contact with their students (Crawley, Fewell, & Sugar, 2009) and the negative perceptions of teachers, where they think online learning involves a heavy workload, technology issues, and communication problems between students and teachers (Choi & Park, 2006).

In this article, the authors focus on the experience of a group of trainee teachers from an institute of higher learning in Malaysia, at managing this unprecedented challenge to deliver education remotely via technology. In this small-scale study, the main research questions were:

1. What are the Malaysian trainee teachers' perception towards the challenges encountered in conducting the online learning during Movement Control Order (MCO)?
2. What opportunities do these challenges faced by the trainee teachers offer to improve their teaching practicum during the MCO?

## **Methodology**

This study employs a qualitative approach to data collection. The selection of participants for this study is based on purposive sampling, in which the researcher 'handpicks cases to be included in the study on the basis of their typicality' (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000). The 'typicality' of their selections was due to the fact that all selected participants conducted online teaching, whereby others from their cohort did not. Besides that, these participants experienced teaching online for the first time, and also, teaching for the first time during a pandemic. The six research participants are final semester students of a post-graduate Diploma in Teaching (Islamic Studies) who have undergone their practicum at selected national schools in Malaysia. To ensure that this study adhere to research ethics, all participants involved gave their consents to participate in this study.

Data for this study was obtained, mainly through an interview, and supplemented by other evidence related to their teaching (daily lesson plans and teaching evidence). The interview was done after the Movement Control Order (MCO) was lifted, while the supplemental evidence was collected during the MCO period (between March and July, 2020). Data was analysed via thematic analysis, in which interview responses from each participant were transcribed and grouped according to the interview protocols. The data went through an iterative process of evaluation through data exploration, coding, reflection and query in order to investigate its interesting themes and emerging themes. Through this rich data, a range of perspectives were identified for coding based on conceptual thematic codes relating to their experiences in the teaching practicum. Input from the interview was also organized and analysed using Nvivo.

## **Findings and Discussion**

The findings show that the trainee teachers had many similar experiences with a few varying ones during their MCO online teaching practicum. The Covid-19 pandemic had pushed for a sudden flip from face-to-face traditional classroom learning to remote online learning, leaving little room for any good period of graceful transitions. Though it started with a hard beginning, the online classes have presented many different opportunities for the trainee teachers to enhance their knowledge, skills, experience, and networking.

### **Trainee Teachers' Initiatives and School Support**

Trainee teachers had to speed up their technological savviness for them to embrace the new phenomenon and become fast learners of this novel learning landscape: by acquiring the necessary knowledge and skills critical to their performance in the online classes.

#### *New Learning Curve*

To be adept with the 21<sup>st</sup>. Century technological teaching and learning requirements during this pandemic, these trainee teachers quickly become “life-long learners” (Caena & Redecker, 2019; Crick & Wilson, 2005; Umi Kalsum, Hutkemri, Suzieleez Syrene, Abd Razak & Riyan Hidayat, 2019). One trainee teacher recounted the experience of equipping themselves with the know-how of online teaching and learning:

As a teacher, we used the time a lot to add knowledge...finding suitable game applications for teaching, exploring the various functions of youtube, listening to presentations from excellent teachers and so on... (Trainee Teacher C).

One trainee teacher remarked:

We [teachers] made various efforts to attract their [the students'] interest. I have also used other platforms such as Prezi, Kahoot and Telegram (Trainee Teacher D).

Putting their students' learning outcomes as their utmost priority, these trainee teachers raised “to the challenge to improve their skills and instructional quality” (Chavan & Yoshikawa, 2013; Kim, Raza & Seidman, 2019; Pianta et al., 2009). These unique intent and effort at learning new knowledge and upskilling to provide an optimum teaching and learning experience for their students are very commendable on the part of these trainee teachers. These efforts would nonetheless “increase their self-efficacy and competence (Woodcock, Sisco & Eady, 2015), bringing them at a higher level of competency in their field.

We also share materials in the 1Malaysia Teacher group. We share and we also accept others' sharing (Trainee Teacher C).

This spirit of camaraderie in knowledge-seeking and sharing among the teaching community, that brought together new and established teachers would leave an indelible mark of positive and meaningful experiences, creating a deep and lasting perspective about the profession, its community and their roles and functions, as they proceed in the journey of becoming true educators. The interactions between trainees and teachers contribute a great deal towards enhanced professional development regarding attitudes, skills, knowledge and self-reflection (Siva & Chan, 2009). Mtika (2011) reiterates, “where formal structures of professional relationships exist, they expose trainee teachers to the broader perspectives of the teaching profession and harness a sense of belongingness among trainees.

### *Institutional Support*

For many trainee teachers, support from the schools in terms of awareness and trainings took place almost immediately. Sharing of knowledge and expertise between teachers also took place as they support one another in ensuring good online teaching and learning can be delivered. A trainee teacher shared the experience undergoing trainings organized by the school:

I found out about the online class from a training organized by teachers. We were introduced in advance about this (online class) from ICT (Information, Communication & Technology) teachers... about Google form, Google Meet, the account provided by the Ministry of Education and so on. To some extent, these has added to my knowledge on how to access these applications. So, the school plays a role in helping teachers relate to online classes. The meeting on online Teaching & Learning was held before the Movement Control Order (MCO) was enforced. Therefore, we applied what we learned during the MCO. The school assisted us a lot (Trainee Teacher D).

Schleicher (2020) remarked, “In this crisis, schools need to provide ways for teachers to remain socially close when they are physically distant”. The impact of supportive engagements between the formal structure (schools) and the trainee teachers would be very beneficial for the trainees in shaping their current and future views of the profession. Having the opportunities to work closely together with fellow teachers and school administrators to manage teaching and learning during this pandemic might facilitate their navigation into a more positive prospects of professional learning within the teaching field.

### **Challenges**

Managing distance learning during the Covid-19 pandemic proved to be a complex teaching and learning scenario that all teachers, including trainee teachers had to grapple with. The bigger part of the trainee teachers’ experiences deals predominantly with challenges of distance learning via technology. This relates to issues of internet quality and appliance accessibility, limitations of non face-to-face teaching and learning, and students’ poor commitment.

#### *Inaccessible/Weak Internet Connection and Limited Appliances*

While the Covid-19 pandemic has pushed schools and other educational institutions online to ensure that effective learning continues, accessibility to quality digital content is crucial especially during the Movement Control Order (MCO) (The Star, 29 March 2020). Difficulties to access or maintain good internet or wifi connections seem to be among the significant hurdles to online learning both for the trainee teachers and their students. This concern was voiced by a trainee teacher with students coming from a lower social-economic status and could be considered as ‘marginal’:

Okay for me, the challenges has of course [to be] the problem of access to internet facilities...it is indeed the most important aspect for this online class, so these students face the cost of buying internet data to access the online platforms..to go into Google classroom or Whatsapp (Trainee Teacher B).

A trainee teacher shared her dilemma caused by weak internet connections, that resulted in misunderstandings by her students and caused disengagements:

If we, the teachers do not answer the students' questions, the students will say that we ignored them and they no longer want to participate in the online class. There are also those who left the Whatsapp group. Previously, I had classes through the Zoom platform, so maybe at that time, the network access was not very good, so the student's voice was not clear and I could not hear the student's voice (Trainee Teacher C).

Another trainee teacher described how limited internet data could hamper the planning and execution of online classes:

In the village area, if you want to get the internet connection, you would need to leave the house and stand in the middle of the road. Some students apologized for having to leave the house to find an internet line (connection). We thought of doing classes at night, but it is not possible when thinking about some students who would need to leave the house to find a working internet line.. There are internet packages that are active or faster only at midnight. There are also those who use the free internet which is only limited to midnight. Apart from that, there are also those who use the free internet provided by the government which is free 1GB from 8am-5pm. (Trainee Teacher D).

The trainee teacher gave further descriptions to the problems of limited appliances and digital skills among the students that pose difficulties to them in attending the online classes.

Among the challenges faced during the learning period are internet access, limited use of electronic gadgets among family members, I mean every family has only one smartphone to use as an online learning tool to be shared among the siblings. For example, in the morning, a Form Three brother will use the smartphone. Later, in the evening, my student will use the smartphone for his online class and then followed by his brother as well. ...Besides, they [the students] are also inadequate at using telecommunication appliances and digital platform like Zoom, Google classroom and others. (Trainee Teacher D).

As experienced first-hand, by these trainee teachers, technology can facilitate seamless migration of face-to-face learning to an online platform, provided that firstly, teachers and students are able to access or own the technology appliances needed to operate the system. Secondly, the internet connection exists and is strong enough to secure everybody on the platforms for a quality online experience. Considered as digital natives, it would be unfair to generalize students' technological skills as at par with one another. Students need to be coached systematically on the know-how and use of the platforms, so that they are able to mutually benefit from the online sessions. In addition, issues relating to costs and affordability of the internet data need to be resolved through a collaborative effort from various stakeholders in the interest of the national education welfare.

### *Students' Negative Attitude, Decreasing Interest and Poor Commitment*

The inception of the online classes witnessed trainee teachers juggling the novelty of the online medium with the need to carry out the syllabus items week by week, while at the same managing inadequate resources and students' performance. The virtual or online class presents itself with a true learner-centred orientation that was not mandatory in the previous face-to-face instruction environment. The sudden transformation of orientation brought about multiple complexities for trainee teachers to conduct lessons, where the students are the center of all attentions. Managing students' attendance, learning and attitude during online seems to be quite an uphill task to accomplish for these new teachers, as students' motivations fluctuated and trending low. These three trainee teachers recalled how this phenomenon took place in an online setting:

At the beginning of the [online]session, they were quite enthusiastic. However, when the session stretched longer, their performance somewhat declined (Trainee Teacher C).

From my observations, students were always late coming into the online classes (Trainee Teacher E).

Students' involvement and commitment for online classes was unsatisfactory because students were not committed in submitting their assignments. Some students had to follow the online classes outside their homes, thus affecting their focus during the online sessions (Trainee Teacher F).

Recollecting the conduct of the online classes as a whole, this trainee teacher summarized the problematics relating to some students' attitude and commitment, that did not contribute positively towards the overall teaching experience:

There are students who do not attend the class, some do not give cooperation, some do not reply messages and so on. When I want to conduct a virtual class using Google Meet, they will give reasons that there is no data or network available, no money to buy prepaid and so on. Some students remained silent, disappeared and did not respond. My doubt is...I see their family background is good, not poor, they wear branded items. But many of my students gave data and money problems as excuses. My school is not located in the countryside or even at an outskirts where there would be internet connection problems. I think my students' excuses were illogical and many gave such reasons. We [teachers] cannot force the students to attend the classes when they give reasons like not having money to buy internet data.

There are students who are diligent, but at the same time, there are also students who are lazy and give many reasons. Roughly speaking, I can say that 50% of them are ready- those who are good and diligent, while the remaining 50% are lazy and use the opportunity to not join the online classes (Trainee Teacher A).

Before MCO, these new trainee teachers had just started to adjust to a higher degree of autonomy linked to the traditional physical classroom management. Inevitably, due to the pandemic, they were pulled drastically into a more independent and student-centred pedagogy through online classes. Thus, these trainee rainee teachers faced many constraints in handling students online since the traditional classroom control diminishes in an online or virtual class.

### *Difficulty to Assess Students' Ability, Discipline and Problems*

According to UNESCO (2020), delivering education remotely changes the learning settings, which leads to a physical and psychological separation and distance between teachers and learners, and among peer learners. In this new learning setting, learners gain more autonomy and teachers lose some opportunities for direct control and supervision. The experiences of trainee teachers during this “pandemic” practicum shed some lights on issues relating to these concerns. Imposing the normal pedagogical practices based on the physical class observations, which the trainee teachers practiced in their teacher training courses now would be far difficult for an online class environment. One teacher trainee remarked the difficulties to ascertain the performance and understanding of the students in an online class:

It is quite difficult for us to evaluate their performance and understanding during this online learning period (Trainee Teacher A).

Another trainee teacher recounted the impact of physical and psychological separation between teachers and students in an online class which affect classroom management and discipline:

From the teacher’s perspective, he/she cannot evaluate the students’ discipline. The teacher is only able to present the lessons, if there are lazy students, or students who are not focused, the teacher is not able to reprimand them...I have asked [my students] to [switch]on [their] camera but it is also difficult to ask them to cooperate with me (Trainee Teacher B).

One trainee teacher placed the complexity of conducting online class on the difficulty to identify and investigate students’ problems at learning, which expounded the limitations of non face-to-face learning:

And we also do not know about the students’ problems of not being able to follow the online classes (Trainee Teacher C).

Another trainee teacher added:

We also do not know about the realities of their lives right now.. Sometimes, parents who are more selfish, for work and so on, we also do not know (Trainee Teacher D).

In mitigating these challenging scenarios, and resolving the issues at hand, supporting and engaging teachers and parents or caregivers to provide regular supervision can help to reduce the sense of distance and disengagement, and manage the rules or disciplines needed for home-based learning (UNESCO, 2020). Reflecting upon these issues, many trainee teachers expressed their preference for the conventional face-to-face interactions that is absent in online classes (students’ immediate responses, teacher-student direct interactions and group dynamics):

Having face-to-face meetings is more satisfying for me. This is because, when I give an instruction, I will be able to see the reactions given by my students. In addition, we can also give direct encouragement to students to do the assignments given at the same time (Trainee Teacher C).

Due to no face-to-face meetings, most students do not understand what they are learning. There are also those who are shy to ask. Furthermore, when they do not

activate the camera during Google Meet, we [teachers] also wonder if these students really understand [the lesson] or not (Trainee Teacher D).

Online classes are a bit bland. It was as if I was the only one speaking (Trainee Teacher C).

In this light, however, the trainee teachers did not dismiss the benefits of online learning altogether. They do embrace the dynamics and diversity of online materials and fun engagements which matched with their students' interests for technology-based edutainment and materials.

Actually, I prefer classes that are conducted online because I can switch to the learning materials. For example, after an Introduction, I can continue to share the video as Set Induction and so on. Compared to learning in the physical classroom, we experience constraints in using the LCD. If I want to use an LCD for my class, I would need to either go to the Resource Room or the Musolla. In short, online classes are easier. I can provide photos and videos at the same time. Also, it is easier for students to understand [the lessons] through the pictures and videos without having to move around [from their classroom to the Resource Room, etc.] That is the advantage of how technology made it easy that I can highlight (Trainee Teacher D).

Prior familiarization with 21st. Century teaching and learning during their course of study, coupled with the in-house trainings in the wake of the pandemic have prepared the trainee teachers with adequate knowledge and skills to conduct online classes at ease. However, schools' inadequate resources and conditions to promote the usage of 21st. Century teaching and learning remain an issue that need huge financial and technological support nationwide.

No recording facility is provided in the Google Meet platform. This is because, I am a trainee teacher, and not a permanent teacher appointed by the Ministry of Education. Teachers under the Ministry will have an official account provided by them, thus have the advantage of recording and downloading the recording of their online classes. Because of that, we had to use our own laptop cameras or phones (Trainee Teacher F).

With the onset of the pandemic and online learning, both teachers and students made their own sacrifices: personal appliances and funds were utilised for online classes to be successfully carried out, along side some form of internet connection supports by the Malaysian government to hasten the way for digitization.

## **Conclusion**

Schleicher (2020) surmised, "Learning is not a transactional process, where students are passive consumers of content, where schools are service providers and where parents are clients. Learning always happen through interaction and in an environment of well-being and self-efficacy for both learners and teachers". In view of the current pandemic situations worldwide where accessibility of vaccines is low and still at experimental stages, online learning seems to be a practice that would stay. Thus, as suggested by Croft (2002), it is necessary to reconceptualize pedagogical orientations based on contextual realities.

The findings of this study provided testimonies and evidence from real experiences of the trainee teachers on how online learning has shifted the autonomy from the teacher to the students. Pedagogical practices especially a wholesale shift in orientation from teacher-centred to learner-centred, are not only issues for trainee teachers in classrooms; they are also issues

for school-curriculum and teacher education (Mtika and Gates, 2010). From this study, the trainee teachers have proved their mettle as they are self-driven to upskill their IT knowledge and performance, used their own resources, and sharing the know-how and expertise with fellow colleagues and teaching community, in order to ensure that the curriculum based-teaching and learning gets to be conducted online and meaningfully for their students. The availability of quality technology and appliances for both teachers and students remains a primary concern, as it serves as a gateway to the online class, without which no such learning will take place.

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