Online Remedial Teaching: Pre-Service Teachers' Experiences and Insights

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Abstract

Remedial instruction plays an essential role in assessing the learners' academic deficiencies in online classrooms. Using a qualitative phenomenological research design, this study explored the pre-service teachers' experiences while conducting online remedial teaching. The semi-structured interview and focused group discussion (FGD) were used to gather information regarding the participants' views and insights while conducting remedial teaching. All interviews were done online, considering the COVID-19 pandemic, which restricted face-to-face contacts. The pre-service teachers' responses during the interview were transcribed verbatim to get an accurate record of the information. The researcher also made some brief notes during the interview. Their responses were thematized, with a focus on online remedial teaching insights. The following themes were derived: (1) motivation; (2) the use of authentic learning activities; (3) mastery of grammar rules; (4) diction and pronunciation awareness; and (5) teaching with confidence and patience. In online remedial teaching, grammar and speech were the most important skills for pre-service teachers to enhance. This gives the pre-service teachers the confidence while conducting online remediation among their students. While immersing with their students online, pre-service teachers discover their teaching weaknesses. Strong motivation to learn is a factor in online teaching, especially for remedial students who are less focused or inattentive. Social media

distractions hinder learning, and online teaching strategies need to develop enthusiasm and drive for independent learning. Real-world learning activities should be used in the classroom because they grab remedial students' attention and make them want to listen and learn more. A sustainable remedial teaching program may further enhance pre-service teachers' teaching skills.

Keywords: experiences, insights, online, pre-service teachers, remedial

Background of the Study

Remedial instruction plays an essential role in assessing students' academic deficiencies in the classroom. Remedial instruction is a method of teaching designed to increase learning outcomes that exceed the stated learning targets (Masbur, 2012 cited in Noprianto, 2019). Students who can't keep up with the normal teaching and learning process in the classroom can get at least the same results as those who are already doing better with help from remedial instruction.

Facilitating the role of a remedial teacher is a way for teachers-to-be to learn and can help them see teaching in a different way. It is good for students who aren't doing well in school or who have fallen behind, but it's also good for the teachers, who can learn from the different activities and ways of teaching. It is expected that, as future teachers, the pre-service teachers have to be trained in their field of expertise so that they can impart their knowledge to their future students better. The insights they can gain from the actual scenario of online learning as remedial teachers can enhance their English skills. Language teaching covers wide areas such as listening, speaking, reading, and writing as well as grammar and vocabulary. While pre-service teachers teach, they do learn, and they will see their weaknesses and mistakes. Students can gain confidence in teaching by being exposed to online learning while also preparing for actual classroom scenarios. They can as well derive

more insights about their students, their behaviors, and their learning styles, which can lead them to explore the strategies or techniques to use with the type of students they handle.

This study explored the experiences of pre-service teachers while conducting online remedial teaching with students having difficulties in the English language. Specifically, the study answered two major questions: (1) What difficulties did you encounter while conducting remedial sessions? (2) What insights have you gained from online remedial teaching experiences?

The goal of this study is to create a long-lasting program for teaching students who have trouble with the English language how to catch up. The study is based on cognitive and social learning theories. Cognitive learning theory focuses on the learner's internal processes, or mind. Learning is considered as an active process in which new information is weighed against prior knowledge. Personal and contextual factors influence and shape human behavior, according to social learning theory. One technique for improving social learning in online situations is to actively and regularly integrate components based on interaction (both student-teacher and student-student interaction) or collaboration. Furthermore, the constructivist theory supports the idea that learning happens through social interactions and that meaning is generated as a result of interaction between humans, their surroundings, and the artifacts around them.

Related Studies

Remedial teaching is a teaching approach that is specifically designed to communicate the correction or treatment of the deficient components of the students' basic skills (Hallahan, Kauffman, & Pullen, 2015). It is intended to assist struggling students in improving or correcting a problem area (Beena, 2019).

Findings showed the importance of remedial instruction among slow learners. Lesa (2022) reported that remedial instruction contributes to academic progress. Remedial teachers can explain the content more clearly and have the capacity to reduce the number of mistakes in English language learning.

Agnes, Thembekile, and Sive (2021) showed that the learners' English skills improved a lot because of the remedial program. They benefit more from skilled and fluent remedial educators who attend to their individual needs.

Larasati, Purwati, and Munir (2019) affirmed that the goal of remedial instruction is to help students do better in school. Remedial teaching offers an excellent opportunity to support remedial students in mastery learning enhancement and achievement in reaching the English threshold. Mogeni, Gathara, and Mambo (2018) found that remedial classes were a strong predictor of academic progress in the English language learning. It could change the values, skills, and attitudes of students, and could also be used to support remedial education and protection techniques.

Ongartyuthanakorn, Daokrajang, Tirangkoor, Kaewsaiha, and Kunasaraphan (2021) found that when students did remedial work, debated, and came to a conclusion, they felt satisfied.

Thirumoorthy (2021) revealed that students who missed a lot of school would benefit most from more remedial programs. Remedial exercises enhanced students' weak learning skills.

Low-achievers benefit from remedial teaching programs that incorporate instructional activities and strategies. Remedial teachers need to design adequate and simplified teaching materials, and they should consider the students' learning overloads (Noprianto, 2019).

Mohamed (2019) pointed out that early intervention should be used to prevent and fix learning problems and help slow students who are at risk of failing or dropping out. Educators should develop a learner-centered learning environment while encouraging remedial students to actively participate in online learning activities (Okwuduba, Zulnaidi, Rauf, & Nwosu, 2022).

Burgess, Dornan, Clarke, and Menesez (2016) emphasized that remedial programs give students the chance to practice and improve their skills and knowledge and give them a structure to do so. This gives students valuable learning experiences.

Wu, Yu, Muhammad, Kuncoroaji, and Darmawan (2022) found that techniques like augmented reality worked well to keep students' attention during remedial instruction. For Khalid and Anjum (2019), assessment is the most important first step in remedial education because it determines how to teach and what comes next. Students learn more from their mistakes if remedial teachers encourage them more (Maheswari, 2018).

Furthermore, Lin and Liu (2017) indicated that the diagnostic test had a positive effect on the ability to understand what was being said and addressed possible problems. They also found that scaffolding helped fix problems, especially listening problems.

Kalyoma (2016) reported a number of problems that made it hard for the remedial program to work. Problems included a bad environment for teaching, not enough teaching resources, large class sizes and overworked teachers, not enough money for planned activities, low participation from key stakeholders, ineffective teaching methods, a lack of professional skills, and low teacher motivation.

In the same vein, Fay (2020) noted some drawbacks of remedial teaching. She found that instructors' lack of patience in examining material and concepts during remediation discouraged students from seeking their assistance. In remedial classes, students who had

favorable experiences with patient instructors demonstrated learning growth. Communication, culture, and emotions have the biggest impacts on remedial instruction as a program (Krzyzaniak, Kaplan, Lucas, Bradley, and Wolf (2021). Moreover, Casingal (2022) revealed that remedial classes are useful because of the increased proportion of independent-level learners. Students' reading level issues, recognized least-mastered abilities, and math difficulties must be addressed in remedial programs. Sahito, Siddiqui, Khawaja, Shaheen, Saeed, and Laghari (2017) proposed that for students to be actively engaging, it is necessary to have the facilities, such as a language lab, computers, and multimedia, audio, and video resources, to speed up and improve teaching and learning and improve English language skills.

However, Larasati, Purwati, and Munir (2019) stressed that remedial teachers should consider some external factors, such as the passivity of the learners, class attendance, time management, and remedial exam scores that contribute to poor or slow learning process.

Methodology

Research Design

The study explored the pre-service teachers' experiences in remedial teaching and figured out what problems they might encounter in conducting it. A qualitative, phenomenological approach was chosen to achieve the research objectives. The researcher used qualitative phenomenology in this study to conduct in-depth analyses of the pre-teachers' experiences while conducting remedial classes with the learners. Qualitative research is appropriate as it describes how people interact with each other, and visual texts show how things look in people's lives (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005:2 in Aspers & Corte, 2019).

Participants

The participants of the study were the thirty-five (35) pre-service teachers or enrolled students in the university who are honed for student internship towards formal teaching. In the study, the participants were the third-year regular students taking up Bachelor of Secondary Education, specializing in English, with ages ranging from 21-22. Majority were females with comparable academic performance. They were purposefully identified as being in the remedial class handled by the researcher herself. These pre-service teachers conducted remedial classes with learners having difficulties in the English class, which lasted for three months.

Data Collection and Analysis

Data were gathered using a semi-structured interview and Focused Group Discussion (FGD). After a series of remedial activities, the participants, who were pre-service teachers, shared their experiences about the remedial classes. The researcher interviewed each of them individually, and they also answered some questions related to the problems and insights from the remedial class. All interviews were done online as a group, considering the COVID-19 pandemic, which restricted face-to-face contacts with the participants. The participants' responses included the challenges they encountered with online remedial teaching and the insights they gained from their experiences. Other information in response to follow-up questions included specific difficulties that they encountered in terms of lesson preparation, conducting remedial sessions, and assessment, how they managed to solve the problems encountered while conducting remedial teaching, as well as their frustrations during the conduct of online remedial classes. Furthermore, they were asked about the motivational techniques they employ during their remedial teaching. Finally, they shared their intellectual and emotional insights gained from being exposed to remedial teaching. The individual interview took two months, with three to five students each day at their convenient hours.

Each student was asked three to five times online during a fifteen-to-thirty-minute session. Students were also convened for focused group discussions about their experiences. The interview was conducted via Google Meet and recorded for further investigation on the students' experiences. Their responses were transcribed verbatim. They were also made to write and share their narratives, which gave the researcher a clearer picture of the students' experiences of online remedial teaching.

Results

The findings of the study focused on the following insights on online remedial teaching: (1) motivation; (2) the use of authentic learning activities; (3) mastery of grammar rules; (4) diction and pronunciation awareness; and (5) teaching with confidence and patience.

Motivation

Since the pre-service teachers encountered remedial students' lack of focus during online remedial classes which was due to the distraction by social media gadgets and sites they get hooked on, they found intrinsic or extrinsic motivation important in online remedial teaching.

According to the participants, their online learners couldn't focus well because of gadgets.

The pre-service teachers addressed the problem of lack of focus by using rewards to motivate their students.

Table 1

Participants' Motivation during Online Remedial Teaching

Lack of Focus	Motivation
"Gadgets and online games have also added to the burden."	*"I've given them some prizes, identifying their interest for them to connect into the learning process."*
"I'm having difficulty capturing her attention; she can't focus well."	*"I give rewards to get my student's attention and eagerness to learn."*
"I find her listening to her favorite songs and reading posts on Facebook, YouTube, and TikTok captions."	*"My way of motivating her is by giving her a reward every time she answers correctly or gets a high score."*
"I'm having a hard time getting her attention, she cannot focus well on what she is reading."	
"One of the difficulties I encountered was getting my student's attention and his eagerness to learn."	

Motivation is an important factor in the teaching-learning process, such that even the richest and best training programs are ineffective if learners lack motivation (Khavid, Imani, Godiny, & Moradi, 2020).

Students are motivated if they are able to actively engage in classroom discussions and activities. They view this as an opportunity to demonstrate to others the depth of the content while simultaneously acquiring new forms of knowledge for their own personal satisfaction (Tasgin & Tunc, 2018 as cited in Cayubit, 2021).

To implement remedial work, Mohamed (2019) emphasized that several tools and procedures were used, including motivation. The teacher's dedication and the students' intrinsic motivation are also necessary. There should be early intervention in curtailing and remedying learning deficiencies and rescuing slow performers at risk of failure or dropping out. Lesa (2022) indicated that in the implementation of remedial teaching, students should feel that remedial teaching is beneficial for their academic achievement. Teachers explain the material more clearly for them to feel motivated to learn English.

Using Authentic Learning Activities

In online remedial teaching, catching the students' attention is necessary. Students get attentive if they are exposed to relevant experiences. The pre-service teachers find authentic learning activities useful which led to active online discussion. The participants in the study provided relevant examples to motivate their students to learn.

Table 2

Authentic Learning Activities Used during Online Remedial Teaching

Authentic Learning Activities
"I gave them examples that they could relate to and let them become familiar with them."   *"I also gave them relatable examples."*
"I let them speak words by letting them talk about their experiences."
"I let them think of words and let them speak their chosen words."   *"I was allowed to construct and speak some words."*
"I have shared with them my past experiences."
"I give quick or key points for prepared strategies."
"I gave them assessment tasks that will show if they really got all the important points that we have tackled."

Authentic activities have real-world relevance. Authentic learning activities in online learning can be a good starting point for learning how to structure an online learning site in which students create their own understandings of new concepts and practices by integrating previous experience, resources, their own research, and current experience (Luo, Murray, and Crompton, 2017).

Wu et al. (2022) emphasized that techniques like augmented reality were effective in getting students' attention during remedial teaching. Further, Luo, Murray, and Crompton, (2017) indicated that authentic activities allow people to work together. Participants in the

pre-service teaching program were given multiple opportunities to work in groups to discuss each other's websites. They appreciated the peer evaluation exercise since it allowed them to share valuable feedback and insights to one another while also assisting their colleagues in improving their websites.

Khalid and Anjum (2019) emphasized that in remedial teaching, assessment is the key beginning, for it determines the approaches to use and the next steps to be taken.

Mastery of Grammar Rules

Pre-service teachers find grammar teaching important, which when done online may help students learn. Online remedial teaching can improve grammar skills of learners with poor understanding of rules and structure.

The participants learned to value the significance of mastering grammar rules as they conducted remedial instruction.

Table 3

Participants' Insights on Grammar Rules

Mastery of Grammar Rules
"I am marking the grammar rules to avoid confusion."
"By following simple rules, one can create a correct and understandable statement or sentence."
"I must master grammar rules, usage…"
"I was also challenged in selecting a set of words that best fit my discussion: "
"Teaching grammar made me realize that it is relevant to embrace the language well."
"I need to develop also my knowledge about grammar because it is our field of specialization, and, this is what we are going to teach to our students someday."
"This also serves as a way for me to review grammar, as I'm pretty bad at it."

Grammar is essential and it functions as a language's foundation. Students should have an in-depth comprehension of language structures and rules in order to speak and write English appropriately.

Larasati, Purwati, and Munir (2019) discovered that remedial teaching provided an excellent opportunity to assist remedial students in mastering learning enhancement through teacher treatment and remedial students' success in reaching the English threshold. However, it did not rule out the possibility that remedial students still failed in remedial class. This is because of several external factors, such as the students' activeness and passiveness, class attendance, time management, and remedial test results. In short, the goal of remedial teaching is to help students improve their learning, especially to master grammar rules   .

Awareness of Diction and Pronunciation

While teaching, the participants thought diction and pronunciation were important. Every time they speak, they need to be careful with the words they utter. The following were the participants' statements about their experience:

Table 4

Participants' Diction and Pronunciation Awareness

Awareness of Diction and Pronunciation
"I still have difficulties with some words, especially those unfamiliar words and words with complicated spelling."   *"Through practicing the correct pronunciation of words, I have become confident and proficient in public speaking."*
"I realized that I am pronouncing some words incorrectly, but I am happy because I learned from my mistakes."

Thirumoorthy (2021) emphasized that remedial exercise assisted in enhancing the weak learning skill or resolving a previously difficult area. Expanding remedial programs so that they are most beneficial to students with learning gaps due to frequent absences is

necessary. It is necessary to construct remedial programs that bridge the gap between what students know and what they are expected to know or achieve in terms of learning outcomes.

Maheswari (2018) revealed that to achieve relearning, teachers and students used a combined inductive and deductive approach to teaching grammar. All of the students agreed that teachers fostering dispositions to learn from mistakes is beneficial. The teachers made the students aware of the impact of strategies on learning and helped them achieve the required modifications in their learning patterns.

Teaching with Confidence and Patience

The participants affirmed that remedial teaching has enhanced their confidence and considered "patience" important while teaching.

Table 5

Confidence and Patience as Participants' Insights on Remedial Teaching

Confidence and Patience
"It boosts my confidence and trust in myself; it's just a matter of patience and perseverance." *"It is fulfilling to impart the knowledge that you have to others, especially to those who need it the most."*
"I was able to improve my teaching demonstration skills; it tested my patience, but I learned another trick for dealing with similar situations in the future." *"It gives me confidence and I hope that every small step forward I made in this activity is a step toward a brighter future for me."*
"Maybe frustration is part of this activity to test my perseverance to accomplish this activity."

Fay (2020) revealed that instructors showed limited patience to review material and concepts during the remediation, which made the students feel intimidated to seek their help. Students with positive experiences with patient instructors, who are willing to respond to questions and review material, showed learning development in remedial courses. In contrast, those who had discouraging experiences often described negative interactions with them.

Ndebele (2014) stated that for students to get the most out of a remedial instruction, the teachers who give it need to be trained and have real materials to use.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The study focused on the pre-service teachers' insights on remedial instruction based on experiences while immersing online with their remedial students having academic deficiencies.

Pre-service teachers find strong intrinsic or extrinsic motivation a factor in online remedial teaching. Online learning makes the students less focused or attentive because of gadgets and the distractions of social media. This hampers their drive towards learning. Motivating remedial students to engage in online dynamic learning develops enthusiasm to improve and cope with their academic deficiencies.

Authentic or real-world learning activities motivate the students more to listen and learn during remedial teaching. These promote attention and engagement among the remedial students to do better and improve language skills.

Proficiency in grammar and speaking significantly enhances remedial pre-service teachers' confidence in teaching online.

The study recommends that pre-service teachers be exposed to experiential learning activities such as online remedial instruction in language acquisition because they discover their weaknesses while immersing with their students. Their experience will help them become better educators in the actual classroom.

A sustainable remedial teaching program may be initiated for student exposure and meaningful teaching and learning experiences.

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