

FROM CRISIS TO CONFIDENCE: HOW COVID-19 TEACHING EXPERIENCES TRANSFORMED TEACHERS IN CAMBRIDGE AND EDEXCEL SCHOOLS IN DHAKA

¹Adneen Rahman, ²*Md. Mahadhi Hasan

¹Sunnydale School, Plot 19A, Road 13, Block G, Bashundhara, Dhaka, Bangladesh

²Assistant Professor, Department of English and Humanities, University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh

*Corresponding Author Email: mahadhi4bd@gmail.com

Article Info	Abstract
Article History Received: December 2024 Revised: April 2025 Published: July 2025	<i>The COVID-19 pandemic forced an unprecedented global shift to online education, compelling teachers to rapidly adapt their pedagogical practices. This study investigates how the COVID-19 teaching experiences transformed English medium school teachers in Dhaka, following the curricula of Cambridge and Edexcel. The study focuses on the challenges, the development of confidence in online teaching tools, and the reshaping of their professional roles and pedagogical approaches. This qualitative research methodology, using teacher narratives, presents the experiences of seven teachers from renowned English medium schools who have shifted to online teaching. The results indicate that teachers encountered considerable obstacles at the outset, such as technological difficulties, insufficient training, and the need to adjust to the dynamics of online classrooms. Nevertheless, as time progressed, their self-assurance increased due to autonomous learning and collaboration with colleagues, resulting in improved digital competence. Additionally, the pandemic transformed their professional roles, fostering a transition from conventional, instructor-focused methodologies to more adaptable, learner-centered strategies. The research emphasizes the need for constant professional development in both technological and emotional aspects of pedagogy. Assuming that the pandemic provided a strong impetus toward lasting changes in teaching methods and teachers' responsibilities, it conforms to new educational trends. This research enhances the understanding of connections between crisis-induced instructional adjustments and their lasting consequences for the teachers' professional development.</i>
Keywords COVID-19; Online Teaching; Teachers' Confidence; English Medium Schools; Pedagogical Transformation; Teacher Narratives;	
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INTRODUCTION

COVID-19 pandemic caused significant disruptions to educational systems worldwide, forcing an overnight transition from traditional face-to-face teaching to online learning. The closure of educational institutions in March 2020 in Bangladesh presented unique challenges, particularly to the country's English Medium schools based in Dhaka City, following the curricula of Cambridge and Edexcel. Despite some of these schools' advantages, they experienced remarkable challenges in adopting online pedagogy (Mondol & Mohiuddin, 2020). Teachers were forced to use unfamiliar technologies and instructional methods, often with inadequate preparation. Still, this crisis also emerged as an impetus toward professional development: teachers became more competent and confident in using technologies. The changes have affected the very core of instructional methodologies and professional responsibilities within the field.

The transition towards digital learning involved complex challenges, including the need to adapt learning materials, maintain student engagement, and overcome the monotony of online settings. Other research by Shenoy et al. (2020) has mapped the potential of technology to facilitate interactivity in virtual exchanges. Similarly, Bedel et al. (2024) identified the role of innovative lesson planning and collaborative approaches as indispensable to effective online instruction. In their study, Kabir and Hasnat (2021) noted that teachers in Bangladesh were compelled to implement novel strategies and utilize digital platforms for virtual classrooms, whereas Sarkar and Biswas (2021) reported a growing acceptance of information and communication technology among teaching professionals. These observations emphasize the resilience and adaptability exhibited by teachers throughout this extraordinary period.

In Dhaka, English medium schools implemented online learning platforms, including Zoom and Google Meet, to maintain educational continuity. Nevertheless, despite the benefits they offer, such as enhanced resource access, these institutions faced challenges in providing effective instruction. Teachers were required to develop engaging lesson plans, promote active student involvement, and tackle various technological obstacles. Bedel et al. (2024) noted that good online teaching requires novel pedagogical approaches and interactive collaboration between teachers and students—factors that often became challenging to implement within Dhaka's context. Subekti (2020) mentioned additional challenges: insufficient infrastructure, limited pedagogical skills, and reduced interaction between teachers and students—all of which were also evident within these schools.

More systemic problems highlighted the predicaments accompanying the transition to online learning. Hossain (2021) observed that while teachers and students in Bangladesh and other countries expressed great interest in online learning, limited internet access and a lack of digital resources presented major obstacles (Silfani et al., 2025; Hasan et al., 2025; Hasan et al., 2018; and Ibrahim 2017; Hasan and Labonya 2016a, 2016b). According to Rema (2021), students' and parents' perceptions of remote learning depended on their economic status and access to technology, thus furthering inequalities in educational outcomes. Subekti (2020) emphasized the importance of finding a balance between the synchronous and asynchronous instructional strategies to increase student engagement and reduce cognitive overload. Despite their effectiveness, the inconsistent application of these methods across institutions of learning showed an acute need for better preparation and support.

While much global research has explored online teaching in the context of the pandemic (e.g., Shenoy, Mahendra, and Vijay, 2020; Sintema, 2020), the specific experiences of teachers in English Medium schools in Dhaka, following the curricula of Cambridge and Edexcel, remained unexplored. Research by Khadija (2021) emphasized the importance of skill-oriented and student-centered resources in a virtual learning environment, while Mondol and Mohiuddin (2020) showed the potential of online education as an effective long-term solution. However, there has not been enough attention to the challenges faced by teachers in English Medium schools and the professional transformations they experienced during this period. Addressing this gap is necessary to understand the implications of the pandemic on pedagogical practices in English medium schools and to guide future educational policies.

The pandemic has signified a pivotal turning point in the realm of education, promoting resilience and flexibility within the teaching profession. Tesar (2021) emphasized the necessity of reevaluating educational frameworks to equip them for prospective emergencies, prioritizing innovation and the incorporation of technology. Subekti (2020) illustrated that the amalgamation of synchronous and asynchronous approaches improved the effectiveness of learning while reducing interruptions. Teachers in English Medium schools in Dhaka faced significant challenges during the pandemic but, at the same time, provided them with the opportunity to build up their confidence, adapt to new technologies, and redefine their professional selves (Kabir & Hasnat, 2021; Sarkar & Biswas, 2021). The research questions

of the current study are: What challenges did English Medium school teachers in Dhaka face while conducting virtual classes during the pandemic?, How did the pandemic-era teaching experiences contribute to building teachers' confidence in using online platforms and tools? and How did these teaching experiences reshape teachers' professional roles and pedagogical approaches?

RESEARCH METHOD

Teacher Narrative Method

The present qualitative research relies on the written narrative method, allowing teachers to write down their experiences in the form of stories, therefore underlining critical events. Narrative inquiry has become increasingly prominent within the social sciences as it provides new insights, possible solutions, and connections to established disciplines such as cultural and literary studies (Andrews et al., 2013). This method allows for the investigation of complexities through valuing the individual teacher's contributions as contributors of primary data (Griffiths, 2009). The study uses narrative methods to examine thinking processes rather than focusing on conclusive outcomes (Polkinghorne, 1995). This way, instructors describe their strengths and challenges in moving to online teaching.

Stories are a means of reflection and problem-solving, and they foster joint learning (Jalongo et al., 1995). In this study, the participants are English Medium Schools teachers with teaching experience ranging from 5 to 25 years. The teachers in this study are fairly inexperienced in teaching online. Their stories represent individual experiences shaped by their unique contexts; hence a multidimensional reality that generalized data does not capture (Razfar, 2012). These stories are not told in a linear fashion; they might have flashbacks or foreshadowing (Hankins, 2003), but they enable the teacher to reflect on their practices in real time (Schön, 1987). In the narrative approach, teachers share doubt, challenges, and solutions in collaborative development. Their stories contribute to knowledge co-creation, fostering professional growth (Vygotsky, 1978). This process not only enhances teacher development but also informs higher education and teacher training programs with the premise of promoting reflective problem-solving predispositions (Schön, 1987).

Sample and Sampling Technique

A purposive sampling technique was used in the selection of individuals capable of providing in-depth information on challenges and experiences involved in online teaching. It was chosen for its ability to select individuals with specific expertise in online teaching; such a choice guaranteed that the stories collected would be substantive and relevant to the goals of the study (Patton, 2002).

Narrative inquiry is the methodology used here, in which purposively sampled teachers submitted 300–450-word first-person narratives of their pandemic teaching experience. While given thematic prompts as a guide, participants were free to structure stories. The approach adequately accesses actual voices but could enhance rigor through recording prompt development, narrative format guidelines, and analysis procedures. The approach aligns well with research aims in exploring challenges, confidence building, and pedagogical change through teachers' personal stories.

The sample consisted of seven teachers from some renowned English Medium schools in Dhaka, following the curricula of Cambridge and Edexcel. The years of teaching experience of the participants ranged from 5 to 25 years, and most of them were inexperienced in online teaching. Both males and females were part of the study sample, teaching different subjects during the early years and primary levels. Teachers were asked to write stories based on three central themes: the challenges they faced while teaching virtually, how experiences during the pandemic increased their confidence in using online platforms and how those experiences changed their professional identities and/or instructional practices.

This purposive approach enabled a sample that captured a wide range of perspectives, hence providing an in-depth understanding of how online teaching impacted teachers' professional development and teaching practices. A demographic table below briefly describes the participants.

Table 1
Demographic Profile of the Participants

Category	TN1	TN2	TN3	TN4	TN5	TN6	TN7
Age	26	50	45	26	30	34	38
Experience	9	8	16	3.5	7	9	11
School Type	Pvt	Pvt	Pvt	Pvt	Pvt	Pvt	Pvt
Designation	Tchr	Tchr	Tchr	Tchr	Tchr	Tchr	Tchr
Level of Students	Primary	KG	Nursery	KG-level	Primary	KG	Nursery
Online Teaching Hours in COVID-19	1400	1300	1400	1300	1400	1300	1300

Data Analysis

The data extracted from the narratives of the teachers were analyzed using thematic analysis, which is one of the qualitative methods used in identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns or themes from data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Being an approach, this is so instrumental in exploring complex experiences by the participants and reflecting on how these shapes their perception of things (Guest et al., 2012). Thematic analysis allowed for an in-depth exploration of the challenges and adaptations that teachers experienced within online teaching. Using the six-phase process outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006), it involved familiarization with the data, generation of initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing and refining themes, and naming of the final themes. Such methodological rigor ensured that the themes were both grounded in the data and in congruence with the research objectives (Uddin et al., 2020). The analysis is driven by a variety of dominant themes, such as technological barriers, gaps in training, confidence development, pedagogical shifts, peer collaboration, and adaptability and resilience. These themes represent the main areas where teachers faced challenges and development since they reveal significant changes in their professional duties and teaching practices. Thematic analysis, as described by Braun and Clarke (2006), allowed for a systematic and in-depth understanding of the experiences among teachers and helped to identify core patterns in their stories.

Strategies such as member checking and peer debriefing were utilized to help alleviate any potential researcher bias and to ensure that data analysis was valid and reliable. Member checking allowed the teachers the opportunity to review their own narratives for the confirmation of accuracy in relation to the interpretation of experiences; it increased the credibility of the findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This process allowed teachers to ensure that their lived experiences were represented authentically. Moreover, peer debriefing allowed other researchers to check and discuss the interpretations in order to minimize bias and increase trustworthiness of the analysis (Creswell & Poth, 2016). All these measures taken together ensured that the interpretations were grounded in the actual narratives of the teachers and not some assumed directions taken by the researcher.

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Research Findings

Seven teachers from various English medium schools participated in this qualitative study and expressed their perspectives through narratives. To protect the privacy of the participants, pseudonyms were used for all teachers and schools in the study.

Teacher Narrative-1

I have started online teaching through my laptop with the Google Meet domain of the school I am teaching in. There were different challenges that I faced while teaching online. Since it was a new platform, both parties (teacher and students) had to struggle initially. I was not aware of the different features of Google Meet, as were my students, but eventually we both learned over the course of time. The internet connection and some errors are still challenging while teaching online. It is also a bit difficult to monitor all the students on the online platform. The students often open other tabs, do not turn on their cameras, and make different excuses, which can lead to wastage of class time, and sometimes as a teacher, I get dissatisfied with my own teaching. As sometimes I face challenges with my laptop and Wi-Fi connection, I came up with the idea of using my mobile as the other device, and I keep mobile data on whenever necessary so that the class time does not get hampered. The students are also reminded about the ground rules every time, which leads to ease to some extent. Proper supervision is a severe problem, which remains till now. But unfortunately, students are taking advantage of the online platform, and as a result, some of them are hampering their studies and delaying regular tasks. Continuously, I am trying to learn to become a better teacher on this platform. I am also taking practical training, which the school organizes I am working in. I am also learning to use some of the features of Google Classroom from YouTube videos.

Indeed, I can confidently say I am better than when I started the first time. The online teaching platform made some of the tasks more manageable and much more time-friendly for me. The online teaching experience gave me more confidence and made me more efficient for the upcoming challenges in the education sector. I have got a pretty good number of private students without physically going to their places, which is convenient for me as a teacher and the students.

Teacher Narrative-2

My name is Samina Yusuf. I have 8 years of experience teaching kindergarten. Without any prior experience taking virtual classes or assessments, I started taking them because my job demanded it. More or less, all aspects of it were a shock to me, but the most challenging one was to control and teach the students how to behave and carry themselves in class since I taught kindergarten. I mainly use my smartphone to take classes, using an external headphone and mic while keeping the phone steady on a mobile phone holder. The infrastructure we use is a portal where links are posted, and each teacher can access their classrooms using the application Zoom through the links. The students do the same. I have had several problems since no organization was ready for it. Broken links, internet issues, and applications crashing were all a daily routine for the first few weeks. Steadily, these issues improved once the websites were upgraded and everything became smoother. Using the screen sharing option, I show my students the worksheets I will be using to take the class. They can download theirs on the school's website, so it is assured everyone can get the worksheet once I upload it there. I only need to upload it once for every student to gain access. For homework, I do the same. It is difficult to know where a student is facing problems unless they speak up. Sometimes I will be finishing the worksheet only to see a student was not paying attention the whole time. I have learned to tackle this issue by going slower and asking students at random the answers. It helps me to catch a glimpse of how the students are doing overall. One issue I am still facing is the lack of mobility. I have to sit for hours straight, damaging my health. I wish to have more movement, or at least not sit all the time. My take on online classes for kindergarten is that it is ineffective. Since kindergarten is mainly for students to have human interaction and learn the basics, the communal feeling of learning with peers is taken out, and studying can be like a chore for many students.

Teacher Narrative-3

I am Sonia Chowdhury from “School B”, and I have been teaching for the last 16 years. Now I teach early years (nursery children). We have a Wi-Fi connection in our house, and I have my laptop. I had to install a separate webcam for it. I got training from the school, and we conducted our class through Google Meet. I am not that technophobic; that was why I was kind of nervous at the very beginning. Panic seized me during screen share. Sometimes I was unable to manage to minimize and maximize the screen. A sudden power cut added fuel to my anxiety as I instantly bounced out of the classroom. Besides, the parents also sat with the kids, which was a nightmare for me. What if I do anything wrong? Similarly, some parents were not appropriately trained with the online platform, especially senior citizens.

To overcome the challenges I faced, I watched many YouTube videos regarding preparation before online classes. I taught myself in front of the mirror how to be confident and look vibrant. I practiced with my friends and colleagues. They helped me as well. I learned how to involve the maximum students at that time. I took a screenshot to know their faces, and it genuinely works. Serious students can take pictures or screenshots, and later they can go through them. There are still challenges that exist. For example, checking classwork is very difficult when they hold their copy in front of the camera. Others often do give tasks. So that face-to-face engagement is missing. I developed myself a lot with virtual teaching. I am more controlled and confident enough to handle situations. I am fully skilled in operating online teaching tools. I learned to work with PowerPoint and words and download relevant teaching materials and videos online. I am learning every day. Now I am an online teacher since everything went online. It opened a new window for a generation like us. I enriched myself with new strategies that were not possible without a pandemic.

Teacher Narrative-4

My name is Naushin. I am a kindergarten teacher at one of Bangladesh's most renowned English medium schools. I take storybook reading and Bangladesh studies classes for kindergarteners. We used the Zoom meeting interface for conducting these classes. I used my laptop to conduct my virtual classes. I was confident when I first started conducting virtual classes, thanks to the practical training my school's IT team has provided me with. However, I faced some obstacles during my experience with online teaching. For instance, poor internet connection and power cuts made conducting online classes difficult. The area where I reside often has a weekly 8-hour power cut during a particular time of the year. Sometimes the internet connection fluctuated, or in some cases, it just dropped. This hampered my smooth flow of teaching. However, I have managed to overcome this problem by keeping other backups, or sometimes I went to some close relative or friend's house to take my class.

I have come up with some new teaching strategies and techniques, taking full advantage of virtual classes. For example, I now have the benefit of showing relatable videos and pictures to children instantly while trying to explain a particular topic to them. For example, when I explain Independence Day to children, I can easily show them photos and videos of figures who have made it happen and what the nation went through during that time. This makes it far easier for students to remember this day. Also, the option of screen sharing has made it very easy to teach children to do many things. For example, I have taught them to draw our country's flag by sharing the whiteboard screen in Zoom.

The pandemic has taught us many things. Being able to teach online is one. I believe that I have gained a new skill. Even ten years ago, no one would have believed in online schools. Today, schools all over the world specialize in virtual classes. Trainings are being given to teachers everywhere on how to be more efficient in this new competency. Teaching online has opened new opportunities for teachers, lecturers, and professors worldwide. Today teachers can take classes from anywhere in the world with so much as a mobile phone and an internet connection. If tomorrow I have to go abroad for an emergency, I know that I will not

be missing my classes. I believe that in the future, when things will get back to regular online, teaching will still be a part of our lives, considering the effort both teachers and students have given to it. Many would prefer online learning over physical classroom-based learning. In the future, parents and students will have two options: virtual and physical classrooms. Also, there would be two types of teachers: one who would be specialized in conducting online classes and the other that would conduct classes in a physical classroom.

Teacher Narrative-5

This is Salima Saberlin, and I am an English language teacher. I have been teaching the English language for eight years—five years in grade six and three years in grade six. In my teaching career, I have the experience of conducting in-person classes and virtual classes. Both have taught me a lot. This pandemic has made us adapt to a lot of unexpected situations. As per the situation, I had to start taking classes virtually without any direct training or prior experience. I was a bit nervous, but a kind of excitement blew my mind. The institution where I work tried hard to provide us with all the necessary information on conducting virtual classes and gave us mental support that helped a lot. I have never found it too challenging to continue except for some challenges like making some of the students present and keeping them focused. On the contrary, I should mention that some of my students gave me the feel as if they were doing in-person classes through their sincerity and enthusiasm. I heard of facing awkward situations created by the intruders, but I did not face any such thing. Another challenging issue is that some of the things are genuinely time-consuming in virtual classes. I have always used my laptop with headphones to take online classes. A microphone attached to the headphones helped reach the students with a clear voice. I have never used a cellphone. With the help of the laptop, I can easily track my students and focus on them. I have been given different IDs and passwords to start classes in various sections using Zoom. There is also a portal named SDS Live. I find it innovative. The complete routines of different classes are given there. The handouts, worksheets, notices for the students, etc., are uploaded there very systemically. Students can download things from this portal. Students also submit their assignments and classwork to this portal. These systems have been upgraded gradually. Though all these are done minutely, offline classes are always the best way.

Virtual teaching has given me an excellent opportunity to upgrade myself technologically. I had always been a technologically backdated person before I started taking classes virtually. My laptop was just a means of entertainment, as I used to watch movies with it, but now it has become my primary source of work. I have become an expert in using different apps and portals and conducting Zoom meetings by myself. I had never imagined that I could type so fast, make slides, and organize things so smoothly. The virtual teaching system has given me a new identity. I can now take classes in any situation. I can now combine everything smoothly. I do not hesitate to cope with any critical situation for teaching my students. Online teaching experience has opened a new opportunity for me as I have learned to use different methods and techniques for teaching. In the new phase of life, online teaching has taught teachers a lot. It has introduced a lot of things to us. We, teachers, are now ready to accept and overcome any challenge.

Teacher Narrative-6

I am Nafisa Hossain from “Z” School, where I have been working for the last 9 years. I teach kindergarten II students English grammar. My experience in online teaching began after the pandemic started in 2020. Teaching online was quite a bit of a challenge since it was a new experience for both teachers and students. We were given training by the school authority for a few weeks before we started teaching online. We used the Zoom software to conduct the classes. I have a Wi-Fi connection and a laptop with a built-in webcam in which I take my classes. And just as backup if the Wi-Fi connection fails, I used my mobile data hotspot to get uninterrupted connection. Since my pupils are kindergarteners, I prepared easy

printable worksheets for them, and since the work is simple, those who did not own a printer could easily copy them in a notebook. The main challenge I faced in an online class is checking the written work they do. So, I started to unmute them one by one and ask them each orally to get feedback. To keep them attentive in class is another challenge I faced. So, I call the names of 3 students together, so they don't get up from their seats when I unmute them. For their understanding of each new topic, I make a hand note on the topic and also show them a video related to it. By doing everything online, I have developed my technical skills as I have to make my worksheets in Microsoft Word. I have also learned some audio and video editing skills. Since I have been teaching online for almost 2 years now, everything has become quite easy and comfortable now. I don't feel tensed at all and take my classes with ease.

Teacher Narrative-7

I am Naznin Akhter from "L School." I am teaching early years classes in school. We were not ready for the school closure. We attended 15 days of training from school on Google Meet before taking an online class. I faced many challenges initially, and training did not help me much. I felt very nervous thinking about my performance. Because parents sit with the students. My biggest problem was electricity failure. I switched to the mobile phone in no time. The little children got inattentive, so quickly bringing them on track was the biggest challenge. Sleepy children late joining and keeping the microphone and camera off were also issues. Sometimes the Wi-Fi connection was slow to run Google Meet. Some children also had the same problem regarding connectivity.

It took quite a long time to overcome. I was never familiar with modern technology like online meetings, public speaking, taking an online class, or giving presentations. I had demo sessions with my co-teacher. We changed our lesson plans several times and made the online class interactive. I became an expert with Google Jam Board, making PowerPoint slides, making worksheets, etc. I overcame shyness that was hampering my overall performance. I developed a variety of strategies in our lesson plan. Our physical activity turned into "fun" activity. We do a lot of "crafting," and we educate through crafting. We developed "fine motor" and "gross motor" activities. We also introduced the "Icebreaking" technique, where we made children move or dance. We also developed a new strategy among the students: readiness with their resources. We praised those who were ready with the learning material. We asked them to find and show something related to their study from their home. It made the learning process easier. There are some existing challenges online. That internet connectivity is the main issue. It gets slower when children and their siblings attend class simultaneously. In addition, some of the senior citizens are still learning the techniques of the online platform. Sometimes they cannot adjust the volume or change the screen.

I have developed myself through a lot of practice. Online teaching was something I had never thought of. Due to this pandemic, I was bound to learn something fruitful. I am more confident and active because I know how to manage my home and children. I distributed my time evenly. Now that I am technically skilled platform. I feel that I step ahead of time. Now I am an online teacher and a full-time mother. The online platform opened a new opportunity for me. I teach my students and mothers at the same time. I involved mothers to follow my techniques to teach their children at home. Mothers can understand situations from the teachers' perspective. Parents are trying their best to help children and teachers.

Table 2 presents the key findings under the themes. The themes are presented in relation to the narratives.

Table 2
Thematic summary table of key findings

Narrative	Challenges in Virtual Teaching	Building Confidence in Online Tools	Evolving Pedagogical Roles
TN-1	Internet issues, student monitoring difficulties, technical errors	Self-learning via YouTube, school training, dual-device adaptation	Shift to learner-centered strategies, private tutoring opportunities
TN-2	Kindergarten engagement, tech instability (broken links/app crashes)	Upgraded school portal, screen-sharing mastery	Emphasis on peer interaction loss, health impacts of prolonged sitting
TN-3	Power cuts, parental presence anxiety, screen-sharing struggles	Mirror practice, peer collaboration, screenshot feedback	Adopted multimedia (videos/PPTs), proactive student engagement techniques
TN-4	Internet/power outages, connectivity drops	Backup locations, Zoom whiteboard/visual aids	Hybrid teaching future vision, instant multimedia integration (videos/images)
TN-5	Student focus, time-consuming tasks	Portal (SDS Live) proficiency, self-taught tech skills	Dual identity (entertainment-to-work laptop use), crisis adaptability
TN-6	Checking written work, kindergarten attention spans	Audio/video editing, structured unmute strategies	Simplified printable worksheets, oral feedback systems
TN-7	Electricity failures, child inattention, shyness	Google Jamboard/PPTs, “fun” activity redesign	Parent-teacher collaboration, crafting-as-pedagogy innovation

Discussion

There are seven teacher narratives that demonstrate the challenges they encounter in the classroom, numbered from TN1 to TN7 respectively.

Challenges in Virtual Teaching

The study showed that amid the pandemic, teachers in English-medium schools in Dhaka experienced numerous challenges while conducting virtual classes. These included technological barriers, lack of previous training, problems in keeping students engaged, and increased stress because of parental involvement and administrative pressure. The teachers most often relied on self-directed learning in overcoming these challenges. Despite these challenges, it still evidenced how some teachers showed resilience, adjusting by transforming innovative solutions that would keep the students engaged and improve their technical skills. Taken together, the findings reflect a rather reactive than proactive approach to the transition to online education. The reliance on personal initiative by the teachers shows institutional failure in providing appropriate training and support. This corroborates the finding of Aktar et al. (2022), who pointed out that professional development programs were insufficient to prepare teachers for digital classrooms. Additionally, teachers' narratives underlined the uneven distribution of resources, where some schools provided minimal technological support. Those inequalities increase stress, especially for teachers who are less tech-savvy or have poorer internet connectivity.

The findings of this research are in line with international studies on educational changes (brought about by the pandemic). For instance, Dhawan (2020) identified online teaching/education as a flexible but stressful alternative, and this concurs with the varied experience of teachers in Dhaka. Furthermore, the emotional toll spelled out by participants agrees with Arslan et al. (2021) in identifying psychological stress due to abrupt workplace

environment changes. However, the Dhaka context has unique cultural dynamics, such as closer parental involvement, as reported by Kamal and Illiyan (2021). The study is conducted to address the gap in understanding the specific issues faced by English medium school teachers precisely in the context of Dhaka. While local studies (e.g., Ahmed et al., 2020) examine broader issues in South Asia, there has been a lack of research into the lived experiences of teachers within the particular context of Dhaka. This research enhances its analysis by bringing in narratives that portray complex difficulties, such as this: "It wasn't just about teaching; it was about surviving every class" (TN5). Such revelations clearly bring home the need for tailor-made professional development programs and context-specific solutions. In doing so, this study has enriched understandings of how teachers coped with exceptional challenges through self-directed learning and adaptive strategies. While earlier research work, for example, Ally (2004), focused primarily on the theoretical underpinnings of online learning, this article reveals how instructors bridged the pragmatic gaps between theoretical knowledge and actual practice. Moreover, the influence of cultural factors, such as parental pressures and administrative influences, adds a new dimension to the global discourse on online learning.

Building Confidence in Online Tools

The pandemic-period switch to online teaching significantly improved teachers' confidence in using digital technologies. Initially, many teachers felt apprehensive about the adoption of technology, but over time, they developed both digital literacy and self-efficacy. As one teacher noted, "At first, I was nervous, unsure how to handle online tools, but after a while, I became more comfortable" (TN1). Although institutional training was often "generic and inadequate" (TN2), teachers relied on peer networks and online resources to learn. One teacher reflected, "I had to ask colleagues and search online tutorials; that's how I picked up the skills" (TN3). That shows the importance of informal learning, a finding that was supported by Ahmed et al. (2020) and Biswas, Roy, and Roy (2020), who indicated the significant role of collaborative learning and independent resources in moving past challenges. As teachers learned about technologies such as learning management systems and virtual whiteboards, their self-confidence grew. A teacher expressed, "Now, I can teach online confidently, I don't feel lost anymore" (TN3). Moreover, the development of resilience came from overcoming "unexpected technical glitches" (TN4), enhancing problem-solving skills. A teacher said, "At first, I would get panicked when the internet cut off or the presentation didn't load, but now I exactly know what to do" (TN5). The development of adaptability heightened their confidence and empowered them to move past challenges better, which similar findings from Akkoyunlu and Soylu (2006) and Farhana et al. (2020) would suggest.

Digital technologies have increased operational efficiency and, therefore, teachers' confidence. The use of automated grading systems and platforms for sharing resources has conserved valuable time and allowed teachers to focus more on instructional activities. One teacher's response was, "Using automated tools for grading saved me so much time, and now I can focus more on teaching" (TN6). This change in perception, from technology as a temporary solution to technology as a vital aspect of education, was a significant change in attitude, which built confidence. This finding is supported by work by Ally (2004) and Kabir and Hasnat (2021), which flags the importance of technology integration to enhance pedagogical practice. However, there were still emotional barriers—for example, teachers felt "public scrutiny in virtual spaces" (TN7). Despite these, their confidence in the use of technology remained at high levels even as they faced these psychological hurdles. This is similar to what other international studies, like Dhawan (2020) and Ally (2004), have found, where "teachers originally resistant subsequently gained confidence through both formal and informal learning experiences". Teachers in Dhaka, like elsewhere, had to resort to the support of peers to overcome the shortcomings of formal education; this is according to

studies conducted by Sable et al. (2021) and Gayatri (2020). This study fills one of the gaps in the extant literature on long-term implications of rapid transitions to online teaching. Unlike prior research, for instance, Akkoyunlu and Soylu (2006), which had adopted the perspective of students, this study emphasizes the perspectives of teachers. It stresses the need to combine technical competencies with emotional support in the scope of professional development. Moving forward, structured and complete training that addresses both the technical and emotional aspects of online teaching is necessary to sustain teachers' trust in upcoming hybrid models, as suggested by Mahmud (2024), Andarwulan et al. (2021), and Hasan et al. (2024).

Evolving Pedagogical Roles

The pandemic has substantially reshaped teachers' professional roles and pedagogical approaches. Teachers had to adopt “creative teaching strategies” like gamified learning, interactive quizzes, and multimedia tools to keep students engaged in a virtual setting. This shifted the focus from teacher-centered to student-centered approaches, concentrating on “flexibility and adaptability” to meet diverse student needs. One teacher noted, “I was expected to design lesson plans considering different levels of access to technology” (TN1), reflecting a focus on equity in the classroom setting. This finding is supported by Aktar et al. (2022) in a study that found flexibility and a learner-centered environment to be key aspects of an online educational space. Furthermore, this change initiated continuous professional growth outside of pedagogical practices. Teachers developed resilience and recognized their ability to “cope with ambiguities” in the face of exceptional challenges (TN2). As one teacher said, “I became more confident in dealing with unexpected situations, for example, when a class had to be moved to another platform immediately” (TN3). This finding is in line with that reported by Solano-Campos and Salmerón (2024), who noted that teachers gained new competencies during the process of overcoming obstacles. Additionally, teachers indicated that “peer collaboration” was important to navigating the new teaching environment. Teachers often relied on colleagues for support with technology, emotional support, and pedagogical support. One specific teacher stated, “We were constantly sharing ideas and solutions; it helped build a stronger sense of community” (TN3), thus expressing the importance of peer networks in fostering professional development.

However, the rapid implementation of digital resources also brought to light shortcomings in systemic support. While teachers embraced technology without hesitation, the focus on “delivering content” often detracted from fostering critical thinking and holistic development. One teacher reflected, “We were focused more on getting the content out rather than on deepening student understanding” (TN4), indicating a potential limiting factor connected with the move to digital. Although teachers demonstrated considerable flexibility, the change was predominantly self-initiated, lacking adequate guidance from institutions. In order to maintain these improvements, educational systems must establish support structures that align technological innovation with pedagogical discipline. Teachers need continuous professional development that merges technology tools with core pedagogical principles, thus ensuring their roles evolve to match the expectations of 21st-century learning objectives, as pointed out by Hasan et al. (2020) and Aktar (2022).

RECOMMENDATIONS AND FUTURE STUDIES

As we go further, it will be very important for English medium schools to focus on continuous professional development in areas where the institutions integrate technology skills with pedagogical knowledge and capacity to continue updating practices on teaching methods in both hybrid and digital classrooms. Future research is needed to explore the longer-term impacts of these transformational experiences on teacher self-efficacy, student engagement, and achievement in the context of English medium schools. Investigations

should emphasize the role of collaboration in driving innovation, but also how institutional structures can provide lasting support for teachers in these institutions in addressing such issues as workload management and the integration of new technologies in a post-pandemic educational environment.

CONCLUSION

In the final analysis, the shift to online teaching during the pandemic dramatically changed the professional roles and pedagogical practices of English medium school teachers in Dhaka. Teachers were amazingly resilient in enhancing their digital literacy and confidence in using online platforms, which impacted classroom practices in teaching. While teachers engaged in innovative student-centered approaches and collaborative problem-solving strategies, key systemic support gaps remain. To sustain these developments, continual professional development, coupled with institutional support, is necessary to overcome both technical and emotional challenges. The findings demonstrate the need for institutional investments in continuous teacher training and digital infrastructure to maintain the confidence and adaptability developed during pandemic-era online teaching. Furthermore, the pedagogical evolution toward interactive, student-centered methods suggests education systems should formally adopt blended learning approaches. Future studies should follow up in examining the long-term effects of these changes on teaching quality and student outcomes in English-medium schools.

INFORMED CONSENT

The authors have obtained informed consent from all participants.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

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