

All Set? ESL Online Teaching among Polytechnic Lecturers during the Covid-19 Pandemic

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Abstract: *Educational institutions around the world have been forced to shut as a result of the Covid-19 outbreak, causing challenges in teaching and learning. The mode of face-to-face teaching in the classroom has quickly given way to web-based interactive teaching. The unexpected shift of online interactive teaching has affected the readiness of educators in offering high-quality education to the learners. Previous research has shown that lecturers at higher education institutions, notably Malaysian universities, were not fully prepared for the abrupt change. While in the polytechnic setting, however, just a few investigations have been undertaken. As such, this study aims to investigate the readiness of polytechnics lecturers in ESL online teaching during the pandemic. A Google Form questionnaire was sent to 35 English lecturers from Sarawak's polytechnics and a semi-structured interview was conducted with three lecturers who teach Communicate English from each polytechnic. The findings revealed that although having a decent comprehension of basic technological abilities, the lecturers are not fully equipped for online teaching due to a lack of training. Whether or not a pandemic is present, it is vital to provide trainings to assist polytechnic lecturers in embracing and preparing for online teaching.*

Keywords: readiness, polytechnic lecturers, online teaching, ESL, Covid-19 pandemic

1. Introduction

The Covid-19 pandemic has trembled the whole world and has left a significant impact on human lives. Lockdowns have occurred in most nations, resulting in the closing of public areas, social gathering places, sports centres, and workplaces. Education is not exempt from this pandemic, which has resulted in the closure of schools for almost a year and has impacted approximately 168 million learners across the globe (UNICEF, 2021; Pokhrel & Chhetri, 2021). To protect their health and safety, students are not permitted to attend school as normal. As such, the teaching has shifted from conventional to virtual settings, with students embracing and using online applications and resources in their learning process via the use of devices and internet connection. Students who learn from home must adjust to this new practice by learning in a web-based setting (United Nations, 2020). They must get acquainted with online learning in order to continue their education in the crisis of Covid-19 disease.

The Malaysian government decided to shut all learning institutions throughout the country in order to prevent the virus from spreading further. Higher education institutions such as polytechnics, colleges, and universities were included in the list (Yassin, 2020). During this wave of the Covid-19 virus, students are not permitted to conduct face-to-face lessons with their lecturers and professors. Hence, the educational system has welcomed the new norms in

which online teaching and learning is completely accepted and implemented to ensure that learning occurs without interruption. Several online platforms including Zoom Meeting, Microsoft Teams, Google Meet, Google Hangout, WhatsApp, and Skype are available to lecturers and professors for conducting virtual courses (Nambiar, 2020). These online platforms may bring convenience to the lecturers and professors to hold their online classrooms and communicate with students through the screens.

However, not every lecturer or professor is fully prepared to deal with this abrupt change. Delivering online classes requires both mental and physical preparation of the lecturers in terms of communicating, performing evaluations, and delivering the learning materials to the pupils (Borotis & Poulymenakou, 2004; Junus et.al, 2021). They must be prepared and put out effort in planning and teaching courses, as well as monitoring students' learning progress and evaluating their academic achievement. Nevertheless, only a few lecturers had gone through the online training and were able to host the lectures remotely (Reyes-Chua et. Al, 2020). Other lecturers who have not had prior experience incorporating online teaching into their courses may not be prepared to execute their online lessons. Consequently, this may cause them in panic and worried since they are unsure how online classes should be conducted efficiently during this worldwide epidemic.

Educators may have a tremendous opportunity to teach successfully if they conduct ESL classes in the new custom during the pandemic. They are able to look into different resources and share relevant learning materials to the learners via the virtual platform provided (Karuppannan & Mohammed, 2020). The lecturers are able to equip students with videos, news and articles which are related to their studies. Nonetheless, lecturers have difficulties owing to students' levels of competency, learning attitudes and learning styles (Godwin-Jones, 2019; Sanmugam et.al, 2017). Each ESL learners possess their own level of proficiency, perspectives and way of acquiring English language. The lecturers used to come up with variety of ways in conducting English lesson in order to fulfill their learning needs. With the execution of online teaching during Covid-19 pandemic, it raises a few concerns. For students, staying at home implies that they will not be able to receive face-to-face assistance and guidance from their lecturers which leads them to be self-reliant. Hence, the role of the lecturer is critical in developing an effective self-directed instruction for the students in this circumstance. As a result, the lecturer's readiness to conduct online courses during the Covid-19 pandemic is called into doubt. As a result of the rapid transition from face-to-face to online instruction, lecturers have had little time to hone their skills and be prepared for the new learning environment.

The outbreak of Covid-19 virus has greatly influenced the educational system and the lecturers' readiness is clearly a necessity. It is critical to determine the lecturers' readiness for the purpose of effectively implementing online courses (Almaniah et. al, 2020). The readiness of a lecturer may make a difference on their teaching as well as their students' learning. Hence, this study sheds light to determine lecturers' readiness in teaching ESL online during the Covid-19 pandemic, specifically in the polytechnic context. The following are the two research questions that have been addressed in this study:

- 1) To what extent are the lecturers' readiness for online ESL classes during the Covid-19 pandemic?
- 2) What is the biggest aspect that affects the lecturers' level of readiness while having online ESL classes during the Covid-19 pandemic?

2. Literature Review

2.1 Online Education in Higher Institutions

Online education can be referred to as the teaching and learning that is carried out in a web-based environment (Sadiku et.al, 2018). With access to the internet, the learning process can be conducted anywhere and anytime with the use of gadgets or online platforms which are free to access by the users. Several teaching and learning applications are available on the internet such as Zoom Meeting, WhatsApp, Microsoft Teams, Skype, Google Meet and Google Classroom. Lecturers and students can utilize these applications provided based on their own learning needs.

Distance learning via the internet is convenient to both lecturers and students. It offers opportunities to the lecturers to come out with innovative teaching (Poe & Stassen, 2002). Information and resources are available on websites, which help them to think of new ways in their lesson delivery. The lecturers may adopt and adapt the teaching approaches according to the students' needs and apply it during online classes. Apart from that, online learning also fulfils the needs of students who are not able or do not favour joining in-person interactions due to certain circumstances (Stern, 2004). Learning can take place as long there is internet connectivity (Sadiku et.al, 2018). This brings not only convenience to the learner, but also to the lecturers to hold classes online.

With the emergence of the Covid-19 pandemic, online education is implemented on a vast scale. Lecturers and students have changed their mode from teaching and learning in classrooms to interacting through the screens. The unexpected transition led to challenges faced by both lecturers and students. Some students are facing internet connectivity problems and lack of digital devices for their virtual learning (Mahyoob, 2020). They probably would lose their track in accessing the online classes. On the flip side, lecturers encountered various challenges in financial, physical and mental (Vu et. al, 2020). They have to put in their efforts in preparing and teaching the lessons to ensure that the learning takes place without disruption (Sadiku et.al, 2018). Designing the task, establishing the learning environment and organizing the resources has to be done in a short period of time in order to aid the students in the learning (Rapanta et.al, 2020). Thus, the readiness of lecturers and students are vital and essential to confront the current change in the teaching and learning system.

2.2 Readiness of Online Teaching in Higher Institutions

Readiness is the condition of being prepared to educate on the Internet (Martin et. al, 2019). It includes a combination of mentalities and experiences to being prepared in online teaching. For institutions, readiness incorporates the facilities, assets and professional advancement in teaching experiences and skills (Kebritchi et al., 2017). Lecturers are always ready with their equipment used, knowledge and expertise in order to deliver their lesson efficiently.

Several higher institutions carried out their study to determine the readiness of their lecturers concerning online teaching during this critical period. A survey research was conducted in numerous universities that are located in different cities in Indonesia. The researchers discovered that lecturers who did not have online teaching experiences were not ready in planning lessons, managing time and communicating online. Furthermore, lecturers found it hard in doing teaching materials preparation, conducting courses, tracking students' learning process, assessing learning as well as maintaining students' enthusiasm in the lesson, which entails them to spend more effort and time (Junus et. al, 2021). Although the lecturers had sufficient readiness in online teaching as they went through some training, certain barriers still

had to be solved in order to host the online lesson smoothly. In other words, the lecturers were not fully prepared with the sudden shift.

In our local context, a study was conducted regarding lecturers' readiness and emotional presence on online teaching data in a Malaysia public university during the pandemic. Findings from the open-ended questions revealed that most of the lecturers insisted on delivering their lesson face-to-face for the laboratory and practical session instead of teaching online. Some issues including internet connectivity, inappropriate working space, obsolete computer equipment and lack of knowledge on online teaching were addressed and faced by the lecturers while working via Internet during the lockdown (Tajuddin et.al, 2020). It was challenging to solve these problems as the lecturers were not ready with the significant change in teaching and learning.

Another study was carried out in regards to evaluating the lecturer's readiness in online learning during the pandemic of Covid-19 in a Malaysian public university. The researchers found out that the lecturers lacked confidence in utilising the Learning Management System (LMS) platform Web 2.0 in facilitating students' learning, giving feedback on assessments, using features provided in LMS for time management and using Webex for real-time meeting. The reason provided was that web-based teaching is not similar to in-person teaching. Lecturers might not be ready, as they did not have experience and training in using the platform provided, like Webex (Shaharaneet et.al, 2020). It is hard for them to complete their jobs within a short time, as they are not familiar with the technology and platform mentioned and thus, the lecturers were not fully ready in this unexpected transition.

There is abundant exploration of lecturer's readiness that took place in higher institutions, specifically in universities. However, limited research has been carried out in polytechnics. A relevant study regarding polytechnic lecturers' perspectives and attitudes towards the usage of web-based teaching was conducted in 2014. A questionnaire was distributed to the lecturers who were serving at polytechnics in Perak, Penang and Selangor. The researcher noted that half of the lecturers adopted CIDOS in their teaching whereas the others chose to carry out face-to-face lessons in classrooms. Findings also revealed that most of the lecturers did not have time in preparing online learning materials and some of them admitted that CIDOS is not easy to access, excessively complicated and hard to utilize. It is advisable that lecturers must be ready and receive the changes in technology (Salam et.al, 2014).

The researchers of this study are concerned whether CIDOS has been fully adopted and utilised by polytechnic lecturers as part of their readiness in online teaching. The researchers would also identify the level of readiness of polytechnics' lecturers towards online teaching. This is to contribute to the discourse and to enrich the data regarding readiness of virtual teaching in higher institutions during Covid-19 pandemic.

2.3 ESL Classroom in Polytechnics

Malaysian polytechnics used to carry out ESL classes for specific purposes. After a few years, they have shifted from English for Specific Purposes (ESP) into Communicative English (CE). CE is an upgraded version of ESP, that prepares students to speak fluently in different social environments and real-life situations (Abdullah & Majid, 2013). Its syllabus is written according to Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), which aims to improve and sharpen students' speaking skills. Eventually, polytechnic graduates will acquire the sufficient skills needed for their future career.

Numerous issues had been addressed by the lecturers in polytechnics in carrying out Communicative English classes. They have encountered problems in dealing with students with different levels of proficiency, students with negative attitudes towards Communicative English, students who were absent as well as the great number of students in the classroom (Sanmugam et.al, 2017). Students in a classroom environment are of varying skills, and their learning styles differ from one another. This is a challenge for lecturers, as they may not be able to satisfy the needs of all of the students. This happens in a typical ESL classroom environment. Concerning the scenario in today’s education system due to the pandemic, lecturers' readiness is crucial for virtual teaching in order for ESL students to learn effectively.

With the educational transformation made in the time of the Covid-19 crisis, the teaching mode has shifted from traditional to virtual. However, conventional teaching in classroom settings is still a favour in Malaysian polytechnics (Yusof et.al, 2013). As such, a question regarding lecturer’s readiness in distance learning has been raised due to the issues addressed above as well as the preference of teaching mode in Malaysian polytechnics. Hence, this research is conducted to ascertain the readiness of polytechnic’s lecturers in online teaching in the ESL Classroom during this pandemic.

3. Method

This study uses mixed-method research design that intends to determine the readiness of lecturers in polytechnics towards ESL online teaching and learning. In a mixed-method research design, the data is collected qualitatively and quantitatively. It is then analysed simultaneously. According to Creswell & Clark (2017), this technique combines quantitative and qualitative methods to get a greater understanding of the topic than either method alone. This method was chosen for this study to provide in-depth comprehension of the issue circulating this study. It gives a deeper understanding as to how ready are the lecturers on conducting online teaching and what are the factors pertaining to their level of readiness. By using this method, the researchers hope to reduce biasness of the results.

This study used both convenience and voluntary sampling techniques to obtain the participants. Convenience sampling is essentially used when the research samples are accessible to the researchers (Saumure and Given, 2003: 124). Voluntary sampling, as the name suggests are samples who are willing and are qualified to participate in a study or research (Murairwa, 2015: 186). The participants of this study are all polytechnic lecturers from Sarawak who are teaching Communicative English. A total of 35 respondents have participated in this study. Table 1 shows the lecturers’ demographic data. Most of the lecturers, which comprises 45.7% from the population, have 6 to 10 years of teaching in polytechnic.

Table 1: Demographic Data

Teaching Experience		
	<1 year – 5 years	17.1%
	6 – 10 years	45.7%
	11 – 15 years	28.6%
	16 years >	8.6%

Two instruments were used to gain data on the readiness of the lecturers, which were a questionnaire and a semi-structured interview. The questionnaire was distributed to the respondents via Google Form. The items and categories of the questionnaire were adapted from the University of Toledo (2017) whereby it consists of 20 items measuring five parts 1) Basic Technical Skills, 2) Learning Management System (Blackboard) Experience, 3) Course

Planning & Time Management, 4) Communication and 5) Course Design. For the purpose of this study, the researchers made appropriate adjustments to fit the setting of the respondents. The questionnaire in this study comprises four parts which are 1) Basic Technical Skills, 2) Teaching, 3) LMS Experience and 4) Course Planning. The items in the questionnaire uses a four-point Likert scale, 1) Always, 2) Frequently, 3) Rarely and 4) Never. Each part has four items, except for Teaching which has seven items. The time given for the respondents to respond to it was three days. The data gathered from the questionnaire will be analysed descriptively. The questionnaire was adapted from the work of Junus et al (2021) which was modified from the University of Toledo (2017) was used this study. However, some items in the questionnaire were altered accordingly. The questionnaire's validity was tested using SPSS Version 26 software. After running by SPSS, the obtain value has been compared to the Critical Values for Pearson's Correlation Coefficient.

Semi-structured interviews provide more in-depth details by allowing the interviewer to investigate and broaden the respondent's replies (Hitchcock and Huges, 1995). The semi-structured interview was conducted online after the distribution of the questionnaire. Participants involved in the interview session were three lecturers, each from different polytechnics located in Sarawak. The interview was conducted through the use of Microsoft Teams. The interview questions consist of three parts as the researchers intended to investigate the readiness of the lecturers on online teaching, the issues and challenges faced by the lecturers and their thoughts on conducting online teaching. Thematic analysis is used to analyse the data collected. To determine the validity and reliability of this study, the researchers used Peer Review Technique and Member Checks.

This study uses the peer review or examination technique to evaluate the questionnaire and interview questions, whether the instruments are plausible to be used for the study. Merriam (2015) defines this technique as discussion with colleagues about the research method, the consistency of emerging results with the raw data, and preliminary interpretations. Merriam went on to say that the review might be done by a colleague who was either familiar with the study or was unfamiliar with the subject. This research made use of the peer review technique by asking two colleagues to review the questionnaire and interview questions and findings. One colleague is a senior lecturer who has been teaching in polytechnics for over 10 years and another, an experienced lecturer who time to time does quantitative research. Both expressed agreement in the use of the questionnaire as it is adapted from previous studies and adjusted to fit the setting of the study. They continued commenting that the findings are aligned with their expectations. As for the interview questions, they suggested the researchers to analyse the findings by using thematic analysis as they found that there are other factors that are affecting the readiness of polytechnic lecturers in online teaching. After receiving the reviews, the researchers made appropriate amendments and had a second review session to ensure reliability. A detailed peer review provides many advantages to a study as it challenges researchers to think from different point of views. This allows the researchers to provide more thorough and insightful data regarding the study's findings.

The member check technique allows the participants to verify the findings of the study made by the researcher to guarantee that the data is accurate and true. The validity of the data from the participants are checked using member checks (Lietz et al, 2006). This is a crucial technique for establishing trustworthiness since it provides legitimacy to the opinions of the participants, reducing the risk of biasness by the researcher. In this study, the researchers jotted down the response of the respondents throughout the interview. The researchers then asked the participants to examine the transcribed data from the interview conducted as the participants

requested for their interview to not be recorded. This process is done after the interview session to ensure that the responses from the participants are transcribed accurately and precisely. Any corrections made by the participants are recorded in the findings of this study.

4. Findings and Discussion

4.1 Validity and Reliability of the Instruments

The following presents the findings and discussion to the questionnaire and interviews related to the lecturers' readiness in web-based teaching during the global pandemic of Covid-19. The validity test was used to validate the questionnaire used in this study. The researchers used SPSS Version 26 software to analyse the validity of their findings. Figure 1, 2, 3 and 4 shows the validity of each part and item in the questionnaire. To analyse the data, the researchers referred to the Critical Values of the Pearson Correlation Coefficient table. By using the $N - 2$ equation to calculate the degree of freedom (DF), the researchers then compared the obtained value to the critical value to ensure the items are valid. In most research, researchers quote 95% confidence interval (0.05) to determine the significance and validity of questionnaire items. According to the Pearson Correlation Coefficient table, the value that the researchers have obtained is 0.3338. All the items of the questionnaire are higher than the critical value (0.3338). Hence, the items in the questionnaires are valid.

4.2 Questionnaire

The instruments were administered through a five-point likert scale questionnaire. The lower the numerical value on the scale, the more acceptable the things are to responders. The Likert scale consists of five different levels: 1) Always, 2) Frequently, 3) Sometimes, 4) Rarely, and 5) Never. Positive and negative answers indicating lecturers' readiness were pooled together for the purpose of data analysis. Positive feedback covers the first and second Likert scales, whereas negative feedback covers the third, fourth, and fifth scales.

Table 2 shows the data gained from the first aspect of the readiness of polytechnic lecturers that was addressed in the questionnaire.

Table 2: Basic Technical Skills

Items	Positive Feedback	Negative Feedback
I use Microsoft Office tools such as Word and PowerPoint to create documents.	94.29	5.71
I perform file management tasks on my computer such as copying, moving, renaming, and deleting files or folders.	94.29	5.71
I use various online teaching platforms such as Microsoft Teams, Zoom Meeting, Google Classroom to conduct my English classes.	57.14	42.86
I use an Internet browser, such as Google Chrome, Firefox or Safari to search the Web and upload/download files and programmes.	97.14	2.86

For items in the Basic Technical Skills category, it was determined that lecturers had excellent basic technical skills, which serve as the foundation for online education. Their skills are shown through the positive feedback they have selected on the Likert scale. What is concerning is that 42.86% of the lecturers rarely use social media platforms to engage with students. This may have an effect on lecturers' online instruction during a pandemic. The lecturers' fundamental

technical abilities are a significant element in determining their preparedness. The study's results indicated that the lecturers are tech - savvy. This is consistent with Koo's (2008) results that insufficient technology access has a marginally significant effect on readiness. Lecturers must be equipped with gadgets that enable them to conduct web-based instruction.

Table 3 reveals the data gained from the second aspect of the readiness of polytechnic lecturers that was addressed in the questionnaire: teaching.

Table 3: Teaching

Items	Positive Feedback	Negative Feedback
I incorporate online material in classes before the pandemic.	82.56	17.14
I have experience in teaching fully online before the pandemic.	2.56	97.14
I provide constructive feedback to students about assessments and questions.	77.14	22.86
I am available to my students on a regular basis for questions and assistance.	65.71	34.29
I enjoy interacting with students online through social media or other discussion forums.	48.75	51.43
I use a variety of online teaching strategies to help my students learn.	57.14	42.86
I provide lessons and activities that are connected to real-world applications.	88.57	11.43

While 82.56 percent of respondents had used internet teaching resources into their courses, just 2.56 percent have successfully conducted an entirely online class prior to the epidemic. In general, this survey reflected the majority of respondents' favourable views about online education. Despite the epidemic, lecturers continue to offer a quality level of education to their pupils. 88.57 percent provide authentic learning material and activities, which aligns with the primary objective of TVET (Technical and Vocational Education and Training), which is to produce highly trained and work-ready graduates. 51.43 percent of lecturers, on the other hand, dislike engaging with students through social media or other discussion forums. This may have an effect on the lecturers' readiness. One explanation may be that by helping students via online learning is challenging, and online learning itself requires less supervision.

Table 4 indicates the data collected on the third aspect of polytechnic lecturers' readiness, which was addressed in the questionnaire.

Table 4: LMS Experience

Items	Positive Feedback	Negative Feedback
I use CIDOS to facilitate student learning.	28.57	71.43
I use CIDOS for students to hand in their assessments.	71.43	28.57
I use CIDOS to evaluate students' assessments	65.71	34.29
I use every feature that is provided in CIDOS.	17.14	82.86

On the subject of the lecturers' LMS experience, the items in the questionnaire showed that the lecturers are capable of using LMS, but that they are primarily interested in utilising LMS for assessment submissions and evaluations. It serves as a platform for lecturers to conduct their classes online, and it allows them to offer a variety of resources to students who are enrolled in the course via this platform. 82.26 percent of those who answered the survey said they did not utilise every function offered by the LMS. CIDOS, on the other hand, is the official online platform for polytechnics in Malaysia. It is possible that the lecturers will be unprepared since they only rarely utilise CIDOS for their regular face to face classes.

Table 5 displays the data collected on the fourth aspect of polytechnic lecturers' readiness, which was addressed in the questionnaire.

Table 5: Course Planning

Items	Positive Feedback	Negative Feedback
I plan my teaching materials according to the lesson plan given.	74.29	25.71
I plan several teaching and learning activities (Group Discussion / Presentation of Assignments / Multimedia Presentation etc.) in the Communicative English lesson.	74.29	25.71
I use various online teaching materials in the Communicative English lesson.	45.71	54.29
I distribute my teaching time according to the lesson plan.	37.14	62.86

Course planning enables instructors to efficiently arrange their lessons. A question on preparedness to use different online teaching resources had a 54.29 percent negative response rate. This is concerning, since the majority of lecturers are having difficulty in developing new online teaching resources. This will have an effect on the ESL classroom, since lecturers will be unable to offer enough information or provide a high-quality education. 62.86 percent of lecturers responded negatively to the statement 'I distribute my teaching time according to the lesson plan'. This may be a result of the unexpected pandemic. Lecturers' time spent preparing online class materials and conducting classes is time intensive, which impacts not only their readiness, but also the ESL classroom.

4.3 Semi-Structured Interview

Another instrument that was used in this study was a semi-structured interview. The main interest of this study was to determine the readiness of polytechnic lecturers in web-based teaching. Using open-ended interview questions, the lecturers' perception of their readiness

level is presented. It was evident from the data collected that the respondents were ready to incorporate online materials in their classes. This shows that they are ready to implement online teaching. The issue faced by some lecturers is that they are used to the traditional way of teaching, that online teaching is seen as a challenge. The responses of the lecturers are reflected in Table 3.

Table 3: Lecturers' Readiness

Respondent	Statement
Sam	"Yes, change is imminent as far as teaching methods and approaches go. I believe teaching and learning are dynamic processes, which humans need to cope with. After all, with the abundance of materials readily made online, the teaching and learning of communicative English can be brought into a more authentic environment."
Bel	"Yes. I do practice using online tools or applications before the pandemic to make my lessons more interesting and to ensure my students are having a great time. I think that some lecturers are having problems with online teaching or using technology in general because they are used to the traditional way of teaching. It is not easy to teach speaking online, because the students have different levels of proficiency, and they refuse to participate in class."
Elle	"Yes, I sometimes incorporate the use of technology during my lessons such as using Kahoot and Quizziz. I don't use technology fully before the pandemic, but I can say that I am ready to use it, given the situation we are in."

The responses show that the lecturers are ready to use technology in teaching the English language. Some respondents have already integrated the use of online platforms to make their classes more interesting and interactive. However, most of the responses from the respondents indicated that they were not given sufficient training to teach fully online. Because of this, online classes become a challenge for them. In Table 4, the lecturers are accustomed to traditional teaching methods, which makes the shift tremendously difficult.

Table 4: Lecturers' Challenges and Teaching Experiences

Respondent	Statement
Sam	"Since I was not specifically trained to teach fully online, engaging into this shift requires significant amount of technical knowledge (ICT) on my part, to enable me make proper planning, designing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating teaching materials that can best optimize students' learning while paying close attention to their individual limitations upon venturing into virtual learning experience."
Bel	"I find online teaching convenient because it offers the opportunity to teach anywhere it fits. After all, 21 st century learning is about incorporating technology to facilitate learning. The only thing lacking that I noticed is that I think we should be given more exposure when using new online platforms. I have been teaching for more than 10 years now, and my daughter has to help me with my online classes like setting up the class, how do I record the class. You see it's difficult for us who are computer illiterate."
Elle	"Online teaching demands more time spent on gadgets, computers thus causing digital fatigue. Communication breakdown happened a lot due to bad connection. Some students do not have enough quota. Sometimes my line is unstable too. Not to mention the need for me to purchase gadgets to conduct these classes. Some of the students don't even have the gadgets for them to be able to come to class."

The responses seen in Table 4 answers to how the lecturers are affected by the shift of conventional teaching to virtual teaching. Although they find online learning beneficial, there are still some restrictions and drawbacks. This part of the interview made an unexpected discovery that covers another aspect in the readiness of the lecturers in online teaching. The

insufficient means needed to conduct online teaching and learning also contributes to the readiness of the lecturers. The findings in Table 5 indicated that one of the main constraints of online teaching is that the lecturers lack training on conducting classes online. Training in the form of seminars, workshops, or programmes need to be conducted to prepare the lecturers for online teaching. The responses are reflected in Table 5.

Table 5: Lecturers’ Training and Thoughts

Respondent	Statement
Sam	“Training on online teaching as a complementary to conventional classroom teaching – yes. Training on conducting classes or teaching sessions fully online – hardly any. When dealing with technology, I would opt to have broader knowledge and skills not only to be able to conduct proper teaching procedures online, but also provide the students technical support necessary should any problem arise on their part or mine.”
Bel	“No. My suggestion for the educators who find it difficult to conduct online learning is that they should explore the software themselves or watch tutorial videos on YouTube. I think the administration should make training programs, honestly, especially for speaking classes. Some students are too shy and passive because they do not want to feel embarrassed if they make mistakes. Sometimes, they do not even respond.”
Elle	“Not really. I have attended only one training programme. The one where we have to learn to use the CIDOS platform but till today I still don’t use it. Only for assignment submissions. I think that the government should provide us with gadgets to conduct our classes easily. Also, give us more training like workshops or seminars. It’s not easy for all of us now.”

The response from the lecturers showed that they are not given sufficient training on using technology in classes. Most of the respondents mentioned that more training should be provided to be for online classes to commence smoothly. Trainings are done in regards to the leaning management system (LMS) for polytechnics, nevertheless it is still inadequate to provide the lecturers with a broader knowledge of using other platforms for online teaching.

4.4 Discussion

The findings of this study revealed that lecturers are ready for online teaching during Covid-19. The findings are in line with Junus et. al. (2021) whereby university instructors have sufficient readiness to conduct virtual classes during the pandemic of the Covid-19. The attitudes of the participants are leaning towards a positive angle as one of them mentioned,

“... change is imminent as far as teaching methods and approaches go.” – Lecturer A

This suggests that prior expertise does not inherently qualify a person to conduct online teaching. According to the findings, the majority of lecturers were ready to hold online lectures. Their positive attitude towards online teaching allows them to be ready to host online lessons during the Covid-19 pandemic with the basic technical skills that they have.

According to the findings, the lecturers are not ready to face online teaching as they lack the experience in using technology in their classes. They were given a few trainings focusing on the LMS and also using technology as a way to make their classroom more interactive. The lack of online teaching courses is a disadvantage during the Covid-19 pandemic. It is mentioned by one of the lecturers that lecturers must not only be ready and prepared for online teaching but they must also assist the students in being able to cope in learning in an online environment.

The study highlights the readiness faced by lecturers using technology in the teaching of the English language. The findings showed that lecturers face numerous challenges in conducting online classes such as the lack of skill and training, the lack of experience and the lack of equipment needed to conduct online English classes.

With the sudden shift of traditional to online teaching, lecturer's readiness might be affected, as technology could be intimidating (Ncube et al, 2014). The findings indicate that more trainings need to be given to the lecturers in adapting themselves to teach online. Training, webinars, or online workshops should be implemented to ensure the readiness of the lecturers. These trainings should be conducted progressively and cover several aspects of online teaching such as technical skills and the use of web-based teaching platforms. They also need to be provided with various types of online application usage to enable them to apply it in their online English classes. This answers the second research question whereby the biggest aspect that affects the lecturers' level of readiness is that they may not be prepared due to lack of experience and training. Lecturers require training in order to increase their readiness to conduct online learning and to assist students in becoming prepared to learn in an online environment (Ncube et al 2014, Nwagwu 2020, Caliskan 2020).

According to the findings, there are other aspects that affect the readiness level of the lecturers. The lecturers depend on their own knowledge of ICT and also a few training courses "as a complementary to conventional classroom teaching" (Lecturer A). Training has been given to the lecturers, however insufficient for them to conduct fully online classes. Bad internet connection is another challenge faced by these lecturers as their internet connection is sometimes unstable and some of the students "do not have enough quota" (Lecturer C) or electronic devices to be able to come to class. Lastly, lecturers find it difficult to conduct online classes when speaking skills are involved due to the lack of guidance and the students' attitude towards the language. This serves as another aspect in the lecturers' readiness.

5. Conclusion

Ultimately, online teaching and learning is necessary especially during this Covid-19 pandemic. This study discovered that lecturers were overall ready for online teaching, but training is required for the lecturers to confront change and be fully ready. By providing adequate and continuous training, with or without the pandemic, online teaching would be a breeze and online learning would be more impactful. This research contributes significance, as the issue of lecturers' readiness in polytechnics are still existing two years into the pandemic. It is anticipated that the Ministry of Higher Education will look upon this matter to ease the situation in order for the lecturers to be fully prepared for online English classes.

However, this research is limited to polytechnics in Sarawak. Future research can include a wider scope of polytechnics. It is recommended for future studies to use a broader and more diverse variety of samples to come up with a wider perspective on lecturer readiness, particularly when it comes to providing them with sufficient training. This research elicits lecturers' opinions about challenges and issues faced which affects their readiness in delivering online classes. Hence, further research should be done in the future to address these difficulties and concerns so that lecturers are completely equipped to teach online.

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