

# Bridging between Beliefs and Needs of Language Teachers in Philippines: Personal Qualities, Strategies, and Framework during COVID-19 Pandemic

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## ABSTRACT

This qualitative case study examines the constraining effects of the internet connectivity to English language teaching communities migrated to online instruction during/ after the COVID-19 pandemic based on the teacher's beliefs in the Philippines' context. The paper also explores the innovative English teaching strategies, needed personal qualities, and framework for the teacher's innovative teaching to navigate their way in delivering instruction under alternative modalities. Through the focus group discussion employing a validated open-ended interview guide as an instrument for data gathering, information was processed through codes and coding techniques outlined by Miles and Huberman (1994) along with the aid of a licensed NVivo 12 software in order to examine the teachers' beliefs on creativity, as well as their personal qualities and how these variables are transformed into innovative offline English teaching strategies. Findings reveal that the five emerging underlying themes on the teachers' beliefs about creativity translated into innovative English teaching strategies for offline instruction are *learnability*, *non-exclusivity*, *essentiality*, *physical context dependency*, and *non-physical context dependency*. Moreover, there are also five developing significant COVID-19 personal qualities for English teachers that were found, including being *creative*, *optimistic*, *versatile*, *inventive*, and *devoted*. These findings became cornerstones of the innovative offline English language teaching framework that can be used as a practical guide in academic communities worldwide where internet connectivity is not dependable for online instruction.



## 1. Introduction

This document is an example of what your language teaching and learning, just like any other discipline, always occur in a learning environment. This learning environment eventually was transformed due to COVID-19, which resulted in remote learning and consequently constrained both learners and teachers from face-to-face teaching and learning sessions. Simply, the pandemic made teaching and learning occur remotely and on digital platforms, according to Choi and Chung (2021). Hence, as Kintanar (2021) mentioned, the situation has demanded that teachers be more creative to become consistently effective.

Consequently, learning has been disrupted, as mentioned by Mundiri et al. (2021), after instruction is done remotely. Remote instruction has been the best option, and that through online, teaching and learning did not stop. As Cardullo, Wang, Burton, & Dong (2021) mentioned, the COVID-19 pandemic caused a significant shift in education, moving all teaching remotely in just days. This shift caused many teachers to

face challenges in preparing and delivering quality content. They added that as teachers shifted their content delivery, teachers also shifted their pedagogical practices to support remote learning.

In this context, teachers need to consider various aspects such as the need for the platform, of which the platform's features fit the need of the new context in the aspect of authentic assessment, responsive learning and application, and the customization of the learning management system. Simply, at the bottom line, everything relies on the availability of consistent and good internet connectivity. This transformation made many educators, including those English language teachers, become migrants into the online form of instruction. Noticeably, since the emergence of COVID-19, there are abundant researches done on educational practices in language teaching in times of the pandemic through the aid of internet connectivity, such as those mentioned in the studies of Zainal and Zainuddin (2021), Hakim (2020), and Cohen and Daniel (2021).

However, it is also noticeable that there is a need to explore more areas where instructional delivery is possible in the absence of internet connectivity or poor connectivity, specifically in the context of English language teaching. This is because when English language teaching is heavily dependent on online modality, an existing disadvantage is also evident among those in academic communities without the opportunity to have online connectivity. But through the discovery of offline educational practices in English language teaching, it can be used as benchmarks in academic communities across the world where internet connectivity is an issue.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, online learning has become the norm for higher educational institutions in many countries, including the Philippines (Navarro et al., 2021). Consequently, this resulted in new teaching and learning experience (Diab and Elgash, 2020), which is also expected to meet with difficulties in transition. According to Zuhairi et al. (2020), in their investigation on the implementation of quality assurance systems for open and distance learning in the Philippines, Indonesia, and Pakistan, they pointed out that there are constraints for those students who have limited access to new technology and online services. Hence, similarly, in the case of English language teaching in the Philippines, given the fact that learning English as a second language already has problems that need to be addressed to ultimately provide the corresponding appropriate solution. As Ramos (2021) said, this situation has been magnified as instruction heavily shifted on online modality, making it incontestable that inequality in education emerges between those who have and those who do not have access to the internet connection.

Nevertheless, this gap of inequality, more in particular in English language teaching, can be possibly bridged through the teachers' beliefs on the concept of creativity in the context of offline instructional delivery. Both beliefs and creativity dynamically play a critical role in the case of instructional delivery for the English language. On the one hand, belief can be viewed as the foundation of human action of which, according to Kirsch (2004), it is either a precondition or a result of something such as religious actions, as observed in his study. An individual, for example, may eat something being offered because of his belief that it does not bring any harm to him, or a person may avoid attending an invitation because of a belief that the invitation will only bring him to trouble. The same is true for a language learner who defies all odds to make sure of learning the language concepts due to a belief that learning the language will provide a greater edge in the quest for success in life. Hence, the performance of an individual on a certain concept is dependent on belief in it.

On the other hand, the concept of creativity, according to Amabile, as cited by Al-Ababneh (2020), is defined as the production of a novel, right ideas in any realm of human activity, from science to the arts, to

education, to business, to everyday life; thus, the ideas have to be new and appropriate to the opportunity or problem presented. In this case, creativity requires the capacity to be divergent in thinking, as contended by Robinson (2011). Hence it is through being divergent that an individual will result in the creation of something original in whatever context there is. Furthermore, something original in this case does not limit to something that has never existed before. Since according to Mikdashi (1999), creativity can be creating something new, combining existing things to create something new, and improving or changing things to create something new for a different context.

In the present academic context, COVID-19 has undeniably re-shaped the type of educational approach in the world. However, in countries where communities are linked by meaningful internet connectivity, the technology has greatly helped in bridging the gap for the educational needs in the current situation as classes shifted into online learning or through remote instruction across online modalities powered by the internet connectivity such as the case of higher education in Romania as reported by Coman, Tiru, Mesesan-Schmitz, Stanciu and Bularca (2020) where higher education has shifted to online teaching and learning due to the effect of the coronavirus pandemic. On the other hand, due to lack of preparation time, teacher and student isolation, and the need for effective pedagogical approaches in China, Ronghuai, Ahmed, Ting-Wen, Zhang, Fabio, & Burgos (2020) reported that open educational resources (OER) were used to overcome the problem. They added that courses or lessons were built around OER and that open education practices (OEP) were done to keep the students motivated and engaged during the long period of online learning.

Indisputably the internet has played a critical role in helping to propel education in the world devastated by the pandemic and where people are placed in isolation, quarantines, and community lockdowns. However, in developing countries like the Philippines, where far-flung communities are still inaccessible by internet connectivity, a great amount of effort is needed to make this type of solution more effective. As reported by Bueno and Pacis (2020) on CNN, as COVID-19 forces life to move online, there are also Filipinos left behind because not everyone in the Philippines is connected to the internet and that there is no inclusivity in the absence of interconnectivity in education.

This presents a challenge for teachers as to how the lessons' teaching is continued without being disrupted by community quarantines and lockdowns issued by the government to minimize the spread of COVID-19. Indeed, the circumstances push harder for Filipino teachers in rural areas where learners are isolated and unreachable by internet connectivity; thus, it calls for resourcefulness to survive in the educational landscape tested by the pandemic.

According to Wright (2016), creativity is at times stimulated by adversity. Meaning to say, a person's ingenuity and critical thinking are pushed to their limit out of the ordinary box of ideas when time demands it. Hence, this study determined the beliefs on creativity in teaching the English language to learners in an offline instructional modality in the context of the Philippines and find out how their beliefs are translated into innovative strategies during offline teaching of the English language as well as identification of their personal qualities that are considered crucial in bridging the gap of inequality through the creation of an innovative offline English teaching instructional delivery framework that is suitable in the context of communities with no internet connectivity. This is because, while there are abundant researches on educational practices done in times of the pandemic through the aid of internet connectivity, it is also noticeable that there is a need to explore more on areas where instructional delivery is possible in the absence of internet connectivity specifically in the context of language teaching.

Therefore, in this study, it is contended that if the beliefs on creativity in teaching the English language as well as the concepts on how these beliefs are translated into innovative strategies along with the personal qualities of offline English teachers are determined, an innovative offline English language teaching framework can be made for instructional delivery of the English language in communities with no internet connectivity and that it can be used to bridge the gap of inequality in education.

## 2. Method

A qualitative case study was conducted at Carcar City Division in Cebu, Philippines. This Division of the Department of Education is known for its competitive performances across the Philippines. Hence, like all other Divisions, the Carcar City Division also continued to deliver instruction to its learners. This was done primarily through the aid of online instruction. Carcar City Division comprises the identified and manageable number of schools spread across flat and mountainous terrain in the city's boundaries. Moreover, while internet connectivity is available in flatlands, a considerable number of schools, as well as the student population residing in the mountainous and remote areas, have limited access to internet connectivity, making it a significant issue in the delivery of instruction that greatly relies on the internet.

There were twenty elementary teachers as participants in the study. The data were taken during the first six months of the school year 2020-2021. The participants were selected based on the inclusion criteria such as (a) being an English teacher in the elementary at Carcar City Division, (b) currently in active service even in the pandemic, (c) at least five years in service, and (d) does not rely on the online modality in instructional delivery due to inaccessibility of internet or

poor internet connectivity either in the teacher's workplace or in the learners' area. In addition, the data were gathered through an interview guide validated by three identified experts, who are tenured professors in the Graduate School of Cebu Technological University and are trained by the Asian Qualitative Research Association.

The focus group discussion was done along with the key informant interview to extensively gather information. This is in consonance with Kasperiniene (2018) in her qualitative study in which interviews were also conducted to find out the collective creativity of the participants. Participants were interviewed both as a group and individually. This was done for two reasons. The first is to see if there are consistencies in their responses. The second is to see the collective themes from their responses.

There were two main transcriptions coming out from the interviews, one from the Focus Group Discussion and the other from the Key Informant Interview. These transcripts were subjected to the analytical processes outlined by Miles and Huberman (1994). These include (a) data reduction, (b) data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. Before the application of the analytical processes, these transcripts were tagged for identification.

In the data reduction stage, the analysis is guided by the principles of selectivity as data were carefully singled out for description. Along with this is the careful use of critical thinking by combining deductive and inductive analysis. The deductive analysis was done, anchoring on the problems raised. Therefore, content words, phrases, statements were located based on the problem being asked. In the inductive analysis, the selection of other data to be highlighted was based on the idea that there could be emerging and related concepts that support the study.

Hence, the initial categorizations were shaped by the pre-established study questions yet were verified by the emerging concepts found in the raw data. In addition, the process of data reduction focused on extracting the participants' beliefs on creativity in teaching, how these beliefs are translated into innovative teaching strategies and the needed qualities that the teachers should possess.

Under the data display stage, the focus shifted on providing an organized, compressed assembly of information that permits the drawing of a conclusion. Hence, in this stage, additional higher-order categories, also known as themes, emerge from the data, and it goes beyond those first discovered during the initial data reduction process. This stage used constant comparison as outlined by Glaser and Strauss (1967), which is considered an intellectually disciplined process of comparing and contrasting across instances to establish significant patterns. After which, further questioning and refinement of these patterns followed as part of an ongoing analytic process.

Lastly, the drawing of the conclusion and verification stage involved stepping back to consider what the analysed data meant and assessing for possible implications in relation to the questions provided. Verification is linked to drawing a conclusion, which entails revisiting data as many times as necessary to cross-check the emergent conclusions.

Moreover, to check the results of the manually processed data following the Miles and Huberman concepts for qualitative data analysis, the NVivo 12 software was used to verify the results. Initially, the transcribed data from the interviews were imported to the software as a new project. These data were arranged accordingly in specific folders for easy identification. Moreover, the coding begins by opening a file and turning on the coding stripes. From here, the nodes are created based on the pre-established questions. This process allows the researcher to identify easily the raw statement covered under the established nodes. Ultimately these nodes are used as the basis for the deduced emerging thematic concepts. Hence, the generated results through the use of NVivo 12 software were compared with the manually generated results following the Miles and Huberman techniques.

Considering the parallelism of the emerging themes both from the manual and auto-generated data, in the end, the analysed data were used as a basis in crafting the innovative offline English teaching framework that can be helpful for teachers around the world who are also experiencing the same situation.

Ethical considerations were also taken significance in the conduct of the study. The participants were protected from bodily and ideological distress, injury, and risk that may occur from joining the study. Moreover, no research procedures caused serious or lasting harm to the participants, and full voluntary consent was obtained from each participant. Any indications of inconvenience that came about because of the time devoured in answering the questions, the study was expected to be stopped as explained to the participants until they feel better and become ready to continue responding to the rest of the questions.

### 3. Findings and Discussion

The study investigated these questions: (1) What are the beliefs about creativity by the English teachers? (2) How are these beliefs translated into innovative strategies in teaching offline the English language? (3) What personal qualities are crucial for innovative offline English teaching? (4) What innovative offline English language teaching framework can be made that is suitable in the context of communities in the world that are unreachable by internet connectivity?

Eventually, findings reveal five common themes of beliefs that emerged in the study both through the use of the Miles and Huberman framework and NVivo 12 analysis, as shown in Table 3.1. Moreover, the teachers translate these beliefs into innovative offline teaching

strategies in teaching the English language. Furthermore, a set of qualities emerged to be significantly valuable as the translation process continued. This is because these qualities fuel the teachers to push the boundaries in teaching the English language during the covid-19 pandemic.

#### 3.1 Emerging Themes of Teachers' Beliefs on Creativity

The succeeding table shows the summary and parallelism of results from Miles and Huberman's analytical framework and through the computer-aided analysis using Nvivo12. The common themes extracted are learnability, non-exclusivity, essentiality, physical context dependency, and non-physical context dependency.

Calderon (2019) reported that according to Fishbein and Ajzen, beliefs serve to guide the decision to perform or not perform a behaviour. Hence, in this study, it is through beliefs that teachers were fuelled to exhibit actions beyond what is expected from them. This is through the use of creativity, which, according to Sternberg and Chowkase (2021), is the formulation of an idea that is both novel and useful with respect to the audience. Accordingly, the interaction of belief and creativity drove them for an innovative performance to continue instructional delivery amidst the existence of the COVID-19 pandemic. An idea in line with Luthans is that creativity is a combination of solutions by individuals or groups in a new way (Hosseini, 2001).

Hence, the five underlying themes of teachers' beliefs on creativity in teaching the English language include learnability, essentiality, non-exclusivity, physical context- dependency, and non-physical context- dependency. In general, these interrelated beliefs are crucial as they shape the concepts and perspectives of the English teachers in their way of using and developing creativity in the English language teaching and learning process that greatly affect the potential academic performance of the learners.

Learnability is the teachers' belief that creativity can be taught, learned, or even restrained. This is best exemplified in the lines that "creativity can be developed," "it can die down when not nurtured properly," "the teacher is crucial for the development of creativity" [Participants, B, D, F, and M]. This shows that teachers have the knowledge that they themselves can possibly develop, improve, unleash or discover their creative potential and that this knowledge is vital in their creativity. This fact aligns with Mazhar and Muhammad (2018), stating that knowledge management and creativity have a positive relationship. This is because it is through knowledge of both the teaching process or pedagogy and content to be taught that the teacher, in this case, may be able to explore more possibilities since, as stated by Ramos (2021) that both their content knowledge and pedagogical skills are essential along the way in transmitting concepts.

Moreover, the same concept holds true for their learners. Meaning to say, teachers believe that their learners' creativity can also be learned. However, it is crucial for the teachers first to learn how to be creative, considering that they are expected to guide the learners in the process later on. Along with that, Barak (2013)

mentioned that creative thought is accessible to almost everyone, and creativity can be learned and enhanced in many ways. This means that aside from the fact that it is possible for people to become creative, there are several possibilities in terms of how a person's creativity can be developed.

**Table 3.1** Comparison of Emerging Themes

Themes and Core Ideas through Miles and Huberman Framework		Common Themes	Themes and Ideas through NVivo 12 Analysis	
Core Ideas	Themes		Themes	Core Ideas
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creativity can be developed</li> <li>• It can die down when not nurtured properly</li> </ul>	Can be understood	<b>Learnability</b>	Comprehensible	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachable</li> <li>• Developed</li> <li>• Die down (if not nurtured)</li> <li>• Development</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachers can be creative, and so as their students</li> <li>• Creativity has no gender</li> <li>• Economic status sometimes cannot stop everyone to be creative</li> </ul>	Can be possessed by everyone	<b>Non-exclusivity</b>	Universal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachers and students can be creative</li> <li>• Creativity is genderless</li> <li>• Anyone can be creative</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creativity helps, especially during this pandemic</li> <li>• Creativity gives hope to find alternatives in teaching constrained by covid-19</li> <li>• Creativity is like the blood that provides life to those who are still navigating in the new normal academic setting</li> </ul>	Is critical for learning	<b>Essentiality</b>	Necessary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Useful in teaching</li> <li>• Helpful in learning</li> <li>• In demand for innovation</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The physical environment matters in being creative because it sometimes limits us in what we do due to lack of availability of resources or colleagues persuading us to stick to what is already there</li> <li>• The setting hinders at some point our creativity due to several reasons, including noise and other interruptions in our thinking process</li> </ul>	Is affected by the environment	<b>Physical context dependency</b>	Environment vulnerability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unconducive learning space</li> <li>• Limited physical resources</li> <li>• Noisy learning environment</li> <li>• Unsupportive people around the environment</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The concept of mediocrity, if embraced, can limit the development of creativity</li> <li>• When superiors die to age and getting more comfortable with the old practices sometimes push us to stay at the same level of thinking</li> </ul>	Is affected by values, beliefs, and practices	<b>Non-physical context dependency</b>	Practice reliant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Settlement for mediocrity</li> <li>• Minimum only concept</li> </ul>

In addition, Walsh, Anders, & Hancock (2013) stated that some of the essentials in developing creativity include understanding and attitude towards creativity as well as the environment itself where it is developed. Thus, clear comprehension of creativity along with the right attitude in the precise context can lead to a growth of one's creativity, and as long as the person possesses this understanding and qualities, creativity will be like a renewable resource that can always be tapped anytime like a process that can be taught as mentioned by Smith (2019).

This means that creativity exists in each person, and the only thing needed is the right stimulus for creativity to come out, grow, and become more useful. It is in this belief that the English teacher's role as facilitator becomes vital and significant for the failure to guide the learner may lead to restraining his creativity, thereby wasting a potentially renewable resource since, according to Tran, Ho, Mackenzie, and Kim (2017) found that lack of guidance for teachers in terms of how to prepare, implement and assess a lesson which aims to develop students' creativity and how to assess students' creativity were major challenges that limited successful teaching of creativity.

Non-exclusivity is the teachers' belief that all people can be creative regardless of the different variables in life. In some of the responses under this theme, the teachers collectively say that "teachers can be creative and so as their students," "creativity has no gender," "economic status sometimes cannot stop everyone to be creative" [Participants, H, M, K, L, T, and B].

These facts are supported by Cremin and Barnes (2015), stating that creativity is not confined to special people or particular arts-based activities, nor is it an undisciplined play. It brings the idea that even in an English language classroom, creative potentials are already present and only wait for the right stimulus to unleash it and because creativity is not restricted to people with distinct capability, this means that even the teacher or the learner from the most remote community can be creative too.

This concept is also supported by Barak (2013) when stating that creative thought is accessible to almost everyone. So, while almost everyone can gain contact with creative thought, some may fail because of their failure to go beyond the ordinary. However, if guided appropriately by creative individuals, they too have the chance to experience the same. As Chaturvedi and Dasgupta (2011) put it, everyone is creative. In this case, it only needs to put all the variables at the right and exact perspective to make it work.

Hence, both teachers and learners are creative in their own way, depending only on the available context. But, needless to say, in an educative process

where teachers are expected to have more knowledge, they must possess the creativity to guide their learners in developing creativity in the entire academic journey, as pointed out by Tran, Ho, Mackenzie, and Kim (2017). In this case, then, teachers who are expectedly creative in nature must first find a way to be creative in order to share their experiences with their learners.

Essentiality is the teachers' belief that creativity is crucial and that knowledge about it is also needed. In the study, some of the teachers' answers under this theme such as those given by teachers are "creativity helps especially during this pandemic," "creativity gives hope to find alternatives in teaching constrained by COVID-19", "creativity is like blood that provides life to those who are still navigating in the new normal academic setting." [Participants, A, C, P, S, T, E, K, and O].

Hence, these responses are supported by Mull (2019) on the fact that in the classroom, creativity is required. It is through creativity, such as in the case of assessing learners in class, that the diverse types of learners are catered and accommodated. This is why, according to Luetkemeyer, Adams, Davis, Redmond, and Hash (2021) that people at present have embarked on a journey to infuse creativity in professional practice.

Moreover, creative delivery of instruction also stimulates learners and motivates them to participate in the learning process since there will be more chances that their needs are addressed, and their desires are given attention. Through the creativity of the English language teacher, the full delivery of the lesson and the achievement of the targeted outcomes originally aligned by the institution will be accomplished.

The failure for the teacher to utilize the full potential of creativity as a classroom tool may also cascade down to a society of citizens whose thinking is only confined to the limits of the usual box of ideas. Saebø, McCammon, & O'Farrell (2007) contended that it is necessary to build creative capacity both in students and in teachers as individual learners, if educational transformation is education so that it fosters creativity. Hence, creativity's critical role is undeniably found. This is because, as argued by Ferrari, Cachia, and Punie (2009), both creativity and innovation in education are not just opportunities but a necessity.

In addition, this theme is supported by Primi and Wechsler (2018) when they contended that creativity along with innovation had been highlighted as essential skills for the 21st century, especially if we consider that both skills can promote human potential by eliciting positive aspects of the individual. Thus, creativity is indispensable in the 21st century. In line with this, it is crucial for every English teacher to possess knowledge of creativity in order to guide the

language learners in the classroom and push their creativity to greater heights. It is through the English teachers' knowledge on creativity that serves essential for them to hone and also develop their learners' creativity in the context of language learning.

Physical Context-dependency is the teachers' belief that the development of creativity is also connected to the substantial part of the physical setting, such as the English teacher and the classroom itself. In their responses, synonymously told that "the physical environment matters in being creative because it sometimes limits us in what we do due to lack of availability of resources or colleagues persuading us to stick to what is already there," "the setting hinders at some point our creativity due to several reasons including noise and other interruptions in our thinking process." [Participant, C, F, N, P, T, and F].

As pointed out by Kinloch (2005), democratizing classrooms helps develop consciousness and develop various ways of dealing with different situations. This means that, in general, the classroom should become an environment for teachers and learners to freely express themselves without fear or constraints as embodied in the concept of psychological safety since it serves as a foundation for effective learning. This is because when people feel safe and comfortable, they are more open to development and negotiating change. This safe environment or climate perception is regarded as a precondition or prerequisite for creativity and performance (Lateef, 2020).

This idea is also in line with UNESCO's concept, of which both Kamylyis and Berki (2014) stated that creativity could be nurtured in the educational context. In order to nurture creative thinking in students effectively, teachers must re-think schooling and reflect on how new educational futures could be outlined by re-examining what students learn, how they learn, where they learn, when they learn, whom they learn with and for whom and why they learn. Through the English teacher's physical presence in the classroom, (s)he can steer the environment in an academic context that promotes the unleashing of learners' creativity through the English teacher's exemplification in every activity being done in the class.

Non-Physical Context-dependency is the teachers' belief that the development of creativity is also dependent on the intangible factors in the setting such as the subject, standards, policies, practices, and even culture. In the study, some responses under this theme coming from teachers include "the concept of mediocrity if embraced can limit the development of creativity," "when superiors due to age and getting comfortable of what were commonly practiced sometimes push us to stay at the same level of thinking." [Participants, G, L, Q, S, A, R, C, T and M].

Consonant with this, according to Saebø, McCammon, & O'Farrell (2007), creativity is a state of mind in which all of our intelligence are working together. It involves seeing, drinking, and innovating. Although it is often found in the creative arts, creativity can be demonstrated in any subject at school or in any aspect of life. In addition, Kamylyis and Berki (2014) posited that creativity could not be taught directly, but educational practice can provide the means, opportunities, and a fertile environment for the creative mind to flourish. This means that creativity has a greater chance to flourish through consistent, continuous practice guided by the standards and policies in the academic context. Such as in the case when the subject being taught can be used as a platform by the teacher to promote the development of creativity. Kamylyis and Berki (2014) added that creativity is not only a privilege of the arts or people associated with the arts. Creative thinking can also be fostered and demonstrated in all school subjects and curriculum areas. Even trivial subject-specific content can nurture creativity in students, provided that the pedagogical approach allows for the expression of creative thinking and imagination.

### **3.2 Transforming Beliefs about Creativity into Innovative Strategies in Offline English Language Teaching**

The emerging themes of beliefs prove that there is a presence of creativity in the English language classroom as it is expressly found in the intangible views of the teachers entrusted to facilitate the learners in learning the English language. Moreover, these beliefs, along with the pressing need to teach the English language in a remote learning context caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, have propelled the teachers to transform them into tangible practices that bridged the teaching gap due to the inaccessibility of internet connectivity. Equipped by the idea that the ultimate goal of teaching the English language is to allow learners not only to memorize grammatical rules but also to eventually transform them into communicators of the language, these English teachers have used their beliefs as foundational cornerstones to make sure that the teaching of the English language in the Philippines, despite the intermittent problems on technology, the expected learning outcomes originally set in the K-12 curriculum are still met.

This study revealed these innovative offline strategies in order for the English teachers to go on with their instructional delivery despite the inevitable fact that the pandemic has obviously cut them off from the usual way of teaching their learners. Stimulated by the existing need as challenged by the COVID-19 pandemic, the English teachers innovatively made and adopted strategies both in the context of the teaching and learning process.

The COVID-19 pandemic resulted in it being mandatory on practically a global scale to implement online distance learning across almost every level and type of educational institution. Today, the vast majority of educational institutions worldwide consider online emergency remote teaching as one of the most effective teaching strategies employed in response to the global education crisis caused by the pandemic, as reported by Karakose (2021).

Along with this, table 3.2 shows that due to the pressing needs in the education of which the context has been affected both by the COVID-19 pandemic and the absence of internet connectivity in some areas

of the learners, the English teachers were able to translate their beliefs on creativity into innovative strategies for continuous offline instructional delivery.

Because creative thought is accessible to almost everyone and creativity can be learned and enhanced in many ways Barak (2013), the English teachers, after equipping themselves with the appropriate knowledge, re-invented, innovated, and modified their ways and practices in order to adapt to the new normal academic setting. The absence of internet connectivity did not stop them from continuously delivering their lessons and teaching their learners the English language.

**Table 3.2** Innovative offline strategies for ELT from creativity beliefs

No	Themes of Beliefs about Creativity	Core Ideas
1	Learnability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Initially searched for knowledge and information from all possible sources in order to deliver instruction through offline modality,</li> <li>Carefully determined learning outcomes across necessary competencies in learning the English language as the basis for offline instructional delivery.</li> <li>Patiently crafted and printed instructional materials into printed modules and recorded video lessons giving emphasis on the vital communication competencies in learning the English language.</li> </ul>
2	Non-exclusivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cautiously contextualized printed modules and recorded video lessons based on acquired knowledge about creativity in order to also improve learners' originality in learning the English language.</li> <li>Painstakingly included creative lessons in the crafted and reviewed creative offline instructional materials for inclusive learning.</li> </ul>
3	Essentiality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cooperatively working and sharing ideas to come up with viable and realistic instructional materials and successful instructional delivery.</li> <li>Creatively transform classrooms into new normal working stations such as re-positioning tools and equipment to effectively produce the deliverables while considering existing health protocols.</li> </ul>
4	Physical Context-Dependency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Instantly made classrooms into recording stations for the crafting of recorded video lessons.</li> <li>Carefully made an inventory of available resources to be used to produce vital instructional materials for offline instruction.</li> <li>Strategically created learning centres in small groups as a point of distribution, collection, and feedbacking with parents and guardians.</li> <li>Tolerantly adjusted the time frame for the completion and submission of printed materials.</li> </ul>
5	Non-Physical Context-Dependency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Carefully crafted new policies for distribution and collection of offline instructional materials as well as dialogues with concerned parents and guardians.</li> </ul>

According to Zhou (2020) as education has changed dramatically, with the distinctive rise of e-learning, whereby teaching is undertaken remotely and on digital platforms. But due to internet problems, from physically discussing lessons directly to their learners, teachers turned out to be actors or actresses in their pre-recorded videos of their lessons, and they have utilized the production of pre-recorded videos as instructional materials and sent them directly to their learners coupled with printed lessons to augment self-directed learning.

In some cases, the radio station is also used as a helpful instructional medium for learners whose locations are in remote areas. This is in line with the idea that many scholarly studies have established the importance of radio-based instruction in student learning and development and argue for the need for a participatory approach to knowledge sharing and dissemination with the help of new media, as pointed out by Ibrahim and Mishra (2016). Along with this, teachers turned out to be radio artists as well in utilizing their voices and guided by their lesson plans in order to transmit their lessons to the most remote areas where internet connectivity is a problem.

In addition, from discussing lessons in big groups, the teachers found ways of innovatively transmitting knowledge through support groups from the families of the learners. The teachers made sure that there were no learners left behind. This is because, as pointed out by Muneer (2021), education is a powerful social instrument, and a pivotal factor that has tremendous potential to change the life patterns of humans in all segments, and that family support group is considered crucial.

Hence, in partnership with parents, instructional materials were not only delivered through various media but as well as contextualized to meet the demands and familiarity of the learners who will be remotely learning based on their own pace. This is in line with the concept of Kampylis and Berki (2014) that creativity can be learned more if teachers continually promote it through all school subjects, create well-designed learning spaces, increase the use of open-ended questions, allow learners to engage in meaningful and authentic activities, and practice collaboration.

Through the belief that everyone can be creative regardless of the different variables in life and that creativity is not confined to special people or particular arts-based activities, nor it is an undisciplined play (Cremin and Barnes, 2015), the teachers went out of the box in their new ways of teaching the English language. On the part of the teachers, regardless of their age or years in teaching, they really have exerted effort of innovating teaching the English language because they believe that they too can learn how to be creative all for the benefit of their learners. Notably, the teachers exerted effort on identifying the needs of their learners prior to crafting instructional materials both in print and recorded videos since understanding learners is crucial in the academic setting (Bock, Zmud, Kim and Lee, 2005). Thus, they also considered offline individualized instruction to meet the diverse needs of learners and as well as gathered learners' environmental background for suitability of the offline instructional materials such as printed modules and recorded videos. On the part of the learners, they were identified by the teachers depending on their capacity to perform and learn, then individualized materials for self-paced instruction were used to make sure that there would be learning of the English language along the way. This was done in agreement with the fact that the analysis of the learners involved in the context is an indispensable part of an educational setting, according to Jabbarifar and Elhambakhsh (2012).

Furthermore, as these teachers focused on how to embrace the new normal academic setting, it led them to seek more new information and knowledge about the issue and have activated their sense of creativity to respond to the pressing need of their profession for the benefit of their learners. This is because, according to

Bock, Zmud, Kim, and Lee (2005), the capacity to be creative and innovative depends on the knowledge like those shared that takes place within and across the workplace.

This shows that the elements of belief and proper attitude expected of a teacher yielded better outcomes as these teachers have opened up their minds and have accepted the fact that the old can never be part of the new normal academic setting, which therefore requires them to be adaptive in order to consistently produce quality outcomes in teaching the English language. Hence, the teachers painstakingly included creative lessons in the crafted and reviewed creative offline instructional materials for inclusive learning and cooperatively worked and shared ideas to come up with viable and realistic instructional materials and successful instructional delivery. Through their quest for a more organized offline instructional delivery, as stated by Kaplan (2019), the student may meet the learning targets.

Indeed, this act of the teachers is a manifestation that creativity is a key competence for sustainability. Hence, without it, according to Ocetkiewicz (2021), the sustainable development paradigm may not be feasible since creativity allows a person like these teachers to search for ways of sustainable management of natural resources, alternative resolutions to problems, and effectively use them.

Moreover, since the development of creativity is also dependent on the tangible part of the physical setting, such as the English teacher and the classroom itself, the teachers also creatively re-structured themselves and their classrooms. Thus, the school's transformation as an educational context and the classroom specifically into a place where learners have every opportunity to practice and exhibit their creativity, as mentioned by Kampylis and Berki (2014), is a requirement that every teacher should do. In this case, the teachers projected a more positive and friendlier image to the learners considering the idea that the COVID-19 pandemic has already discouraged the learners from continuing learning because of the new setting. In fact, Chi-chung, Cheung, and Kentman (2021) reported that students using the DL method performed at a significantly lower level than students learning via the conventional approach.

English teachers have transformed the physical classroom into new normal working stations such as re-positioning of tools and equipment to effectively produce the deliverables while considering existing health protocols, making classrooms into recording studios for the crafting of recorded video lessons, conducting an inventory of available resources to be used for the production of vital instructional materials for offline instruction, and created learning centres in small groups as a point of distribution, collection and feedbacking with parents and guardians.

Kampylis and Berki (2014) added that educational practice could provide the means, opportunities, and a fertile environment for the creative mind to flourish. In this case, the teaching and learning process has totally evolved from physically synchronous to virtually synchronous or offline asynchronous in the absence of internet connectivity, along with teachers' important value of tolerance. According to Lysenko, Shtefan, and Kholodniak, education also needs the promotion of national and universal values such as tolerance, especially in the rapid transformation like during the pandemic.

In this case, as a consequence of the pandemic, this resulted in new teaching and learning experience (Diab and Elgash, 2020); hence the teachers promoted tolerance by adjusting the time frame for completion and submission of printed instructional materials and carefully crafted new policies for distribution and collection of offline instructional materials as well as dialogues with concerned parents and guardians. Hence, when teaching is in an unprecedented way (Rao, 2013), learners were given a wider degree of freedom to work on modularized lessons at their own pace. Teachers are extending the maximum amount of tolerance on reviewing responses, providing timely and sensible feedback to ensure that expected outcomes are met.

### 3.3 The Covid Personal Qualities of Offline English Language Teachers

Teaching always requires a lot of positive qualities for an individual to remain in love with it through the

period of time. Much more positive qualities are needed by the teachers, especially when times are tested by the pandemic resulting in the new landscape of teaching and learning in a different type of normal.

The study revealed that since the pandemic made its hardest blow on the academic community, those who were greatly affected were not those who still have the opportunity to immediately connect virtually through the presence of internet connectivity in their communities. Rather, those who greatly felt the impact of the pandemic came from rural areas where they are left with the option to leave the concept of utilization of the internet due to its absence in the community and therefore must find alternative offline solutions that will help in the task of teaching and making sure every learner is never left behind and that hopefully help in giving the comprehension skills that are needed for every learner transformed into a valuable asset in the country as mentioned by Boltron and Ramos (2021).

In Figure 3.1, the emerging themes showing the five personal qualities of offline teachers of English, including the concept of the need to be creative, optimistic, versatile, inventive, and devoted, collectively known as COVID, are presented. In addition, the core ideas associated with each theme are presented accordingly. Teachers, in this case, demonstrated the creative quality as they sought to find better and more suitable solutions in their context without simply allowing themselves to get jammed in the already devastated academic community caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.



Figure 3.1 COVID personal qualities needed for innovative offline English teaching

Instead, they managed to navigate themselves along a very narrow way of instructional delivery of which options are constrained by both the pandemic and the absence of internet connectivity with the ultimate goal only of making sure that knowledge is transferred and competencies are developed. Two crucial factors have shifted due to the pandemic. First, pedagogical adaptations have proven to be pivotal as traditional in-person lectures do not translate to a remote learning environment. No matter the type of channel used (radio, TV, mobile, online platforms, etc.), teachers need to adapt their practices and be creative to keep students engaged as every household has become a classroom - more often than not - without an environment that supports learning. Second, the pandemic has recalibrated how teachers divide their time between teaching, engaging with students, and administrative tasks. In Brazil, according to a survey conducted by Instituto Peninsula, 83% of teachers did not consider being prepared to teach remotely, 67% were anxious, 38% felt tired, and less than 10% were happy or satisfied. The pandemic has highlighted the need for flexibility and more time for student-teacher interactions.

The teachers' creative quality paved the way to bridge the instructional delivery gap brought by the non-physical educational setting as the government banned physical contact for learners to minimize the spread of the virus. The teachers' creative mindset opened new ways and opportunities to craft strategies to meet ends as the Department of Education required. The experience of high stress and negative affect can diminish teachers' creative resources—their creative beliefs, affect, thinking, and behaviours (Anderson, 2020).

Creativity is a critical part of sustaining the joy of work. In fact, on the whole, recent college graduates care more about being creative in their job than getting a high salary (National Association of Colleges and Employers, 2014). The fundamental yearning for creativity in people relates to a need for agency and autonomy in personal and professional life (Bandura, 2006). These needs are no less powerful for educators than other professionals, and they are likely key conditions for joy in the classroom. Simply put, teachers today, especially during the global pandemic crisis, seek support and permission to be agentic and creative in their work, which may play a role in mitigating stress and enhancing well-being during crises.

An individual's creative action results, in part, from holding a creative growth mindset and approaching failures as opportunities (Amabile et al., 1996; Hass et al., 2016) and from feeling self-efficacious and agentic about one's potential to be creative (Karwowski and Beghetto, 2018). Emphasizing openness to mistakes and improvement,

a creative growth mindset likely relates to teachers' attitude and affect when facing uncertainty.

Creative growth is only possible if individuals are open to vulnerability and are willing to take risks, especially when facing uncertainty—a central component to the creative process (Amabile, 2017). The focus of this current study is the links between teachers' creative beliefs and affect, the support for creativity in their school, their overall well-being, and their capacity to adapt to challenging circumstances.

Moreover, their optimistic quality provided them the courage and strength to look for alternative ways for instructional delivery. Teachers simply did not stop due to the challenges met along the way. Instead, they tried to modify ways to blend in the context of the learning environment that the COVID-19 pandemic has plagued. As optimists, they recognize reality constraints and aspire to probable outcomes. They see the path to success as full of twists and turns. Teaching students about optimism help see unpleasant events as learning opportunities. Optimism has been defined as an emotionally intelligent attitude that provides a person with the strength to persist throughout life (Goleman, 1995). Optimistic managers have done better on performance measures, including decision-making and interpersonal tasks, according to research by Straw & Bassade (1993). The influence of optimism on education has just begun to be studied, and the field demands more work (Coleman & Willower, 1996).

The teachers also became versatile as they adapted to the demands of time. Their persistence to find better options to produce the outcomes and develop the competencies of their learners have motivated them to suit themselves in the present academic context, simply making them flexible in teaching. In which according to Piquart and Schwinger (2021), being versatile or flexible is important in the realization of inclusive education.

The approach goes beyond providing low-tech materials: it gives information on how to access learning programs, ensures students access paper-based learning materials and includes home visits to monitor distance learning activities. They provide weekly paper-based resources to students and meet them weekly to provide their marked worksheets and issue new ones for the week ahead.

In addition, they were also inventive due to their being creative. They mix and match all available materials and strategies to make sure that they will be able to continue on their pace of teaching the English language. According to Van den Berg and Cocky Fortuin- van (2019), inventive teachers, along with their being wise and bold, dare to begin the search for meaning with students and, in that process, learn to engage with students in a more flexible and natural manner. Hence, this is the case of the participants of

the study that resulted in their continuous quest for learning meanings of concepts outlined in the curriculum.

Finally, there is devoted has led them to sustain and persevere no matter what the obstacles were along the way. While it is undeniable that they have come themselves out of their own comfort zones, they continued to stay and were obedient to their sworn promise in the teaching profession, which effectively made them survive in one of the most difficult times in the history of education. As observed, devotion is one of the personality traits that a teacher should have.

Devotion is defined as giving up one's own interests for anything sought or for the sake of an end, giving up one's own personal wishes, aspirations, and desires. (Bakırcıoğlu, 2014; Türk Dil Kurumu, 2017). Monroe (2002) asserts that devotion refers to acting for the sake of others. Engaged with people who are biological, psychological, and sociocultural beings, a teacher should be compassionate, devoted, tolerant, and patient towards people (Helvacı, 2016).

Teaching requires characteristics like altruism, tolerance, continuous self-renewal, fulfilling the profession with love as well as field knowledge and professional knowledge (Girgin & Baysal, 2005). According to Burns and Carpenter (2008), ineffective and successful schools, teachers should continue to work diligently against the challenges they experience in order to be more useful for their students and to

achieve the school's goals more effectively and rapidly. Similarly, as for contributing to their schools, it is crucial that teachers act with the team's spirit and with the consciousness of being "we" and work voluntarily in devotion and sacrifice beyond what is expected of them (Bogler & Somech, 2005).

### 3.4 Innovative Offline English Language Teaching Framework

Greatly challenged by the pandemic, as leaders in the academic community persistently pushed for non-stop learning despite the effect of the community quarantines, non-physical classes, and limited by the ultimate absence of internet connectivity in some communities of the learners, inequality is clearly emerging on the side of those who are totally disconnected. To bridge this gap and be true to the mandate that no learner should be left behind in this case, in the context of learning the English language, an innovative offline English language teaching framework is created. The framework shows that through the transformation of beliefs on being creative, ELT teachers' pedagogical knowledge and competencies can be useful in the innovation of practical and functional strategies that are adapted and suitable to the needs of the current educational context. Moreover, this concept will only sustain if and when ELT teachers possess and value the critical role of five qualities which are known here as covid personal qualities.

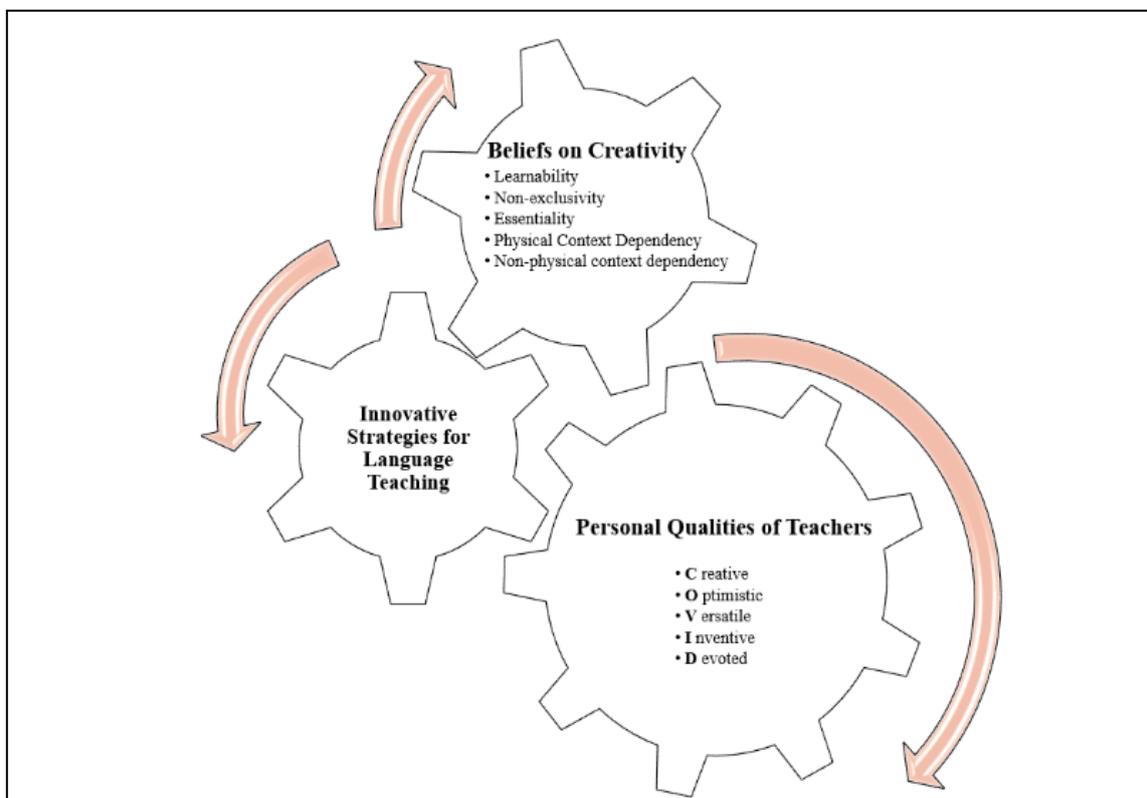


Figure 3.2 Innovative Offline English Language Teaching Framework

#### 4. Conclusion

The study concludes that while English language teaching is affected by the shifting of the academic landscape caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, despite the absence or limitation of internet connectivity, these language teachers believed the concept of learnability and non-exclusivity essentiality, physical context dependency, and non-physical context-dependency of creativity. In addition, beliefs in creativity became the foundation of coming up with innovative strategies to continue their instructional delivery. And in order to sustain instructional delivery, English language teachers anchored on five important qualities, namely being creative, optimistic, versatile, inventive, and devoted. These qualities will fuel teachers to go on teaching the English language regardless of the circumstances. Finally, in this study, the innovative offline English language teaching framework for instructional delivery in communities with no to limited internet connectivity can be useful but demands careful consideration of all elements involved, including the various beliefs of teachers on creativity and their translation of these beliefs into effective strategies as well as their personal qualities to effectively continue the teaching and learning of the English language despite the presence of the COVID-19 pandemic. It is only through the translation of these beliefs into creativity, meaning by simply putting them into tangible actions, that a different result will come out without getting constrained by the pandemic as teachers of English deliver their instruction.

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