

# **AN APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY OF TEACHER'S PERSPECTIVES ON SYNCHRONOUS LEARNING AND MYANMAR EDUCATION DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

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## **Abstract**

This study examined the use of appreciative inquiry to guide the development of online synchronous learning resources for teachers in Myanmar. Through the four appreciative inquiry processes: discover, dream, design, and delivery, teachers in this study reflected on their own teaching experiences and provided valuable recommendations for other teachers. The appreciative inquiry, a qualitative research approach, was applied to identify and understand the best features and practices in asynchronous learning at faith-based institutions. The constructivist theory is employed to understand the experiences of teachers practicing online synchronous learning and construct new knowledge upon the foundation of prior knowledge about asynchronous learning. This study aims to appreciate the best practices of online synchronous learning and to design an ideal online synchronous learning in faith-based institutions in Myanmar. The data collection methods were interviews and observations. The data analysis process was done by thematic analysis from Braun and Clarke (2006). This study was conducted at two faith-based institutions: high school (3 participants) and college (6 participants). The findings of this study were disseminated to research participants, school administrators, and teachers practicing online synchronous learning.

## **Keywords**

Appreciate inquiry, constructivist, synchronous learning, faith-based institution

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Myanmar has been facing a COVID-19 pandemic since March 2020. Since March 2020, face-to-face classroom learning in Myanmar has shifted to online synchronous learning (OSL). COVID-19 caused a quick transition from face-to-face classroom instruction to online learning in Myanmar and worldwide (Day & Verbiest, 2021). Internet users are increasing daily, and internet usage has reached 65 percent of the population (Myanmar Times Magazine, 2020). Nevertheless, teachers from Myanmar interested in technology must gain teaching experience in online education.

The COVID-19 pandemic and the political issues in Myanmar have affected the country's educational system (Myanmar Ministry of Education, 2021; San, 2021). Many teachers are still discovering how to launch widespread online teaching and learning. Some teachers need training for OSL because they have never utilized it (Mon, 2020; Myanmar Ministry of Education, 2021). However, starting online teaching and learning in Myanmar is challenging and threatened by the following three reasons: limited internet connection, the COVID-19 pandemic, and political issues (Marnn et al., 2021; Mon, 2020; Myanmar Ministry of Education, 2021; San, 2021).

To construct the ideal online synchronous learning environment in Myanmar's faith-based institutions, this study attempts to comprehend the best practices of online synchronous learning. The constructivist theory is applied to comprehend teachers' experiences using online synchronous learning and to build new knowledge based on existing knowledge about asynchronous learning. In this study, we focused on creating the effective cycle of an ideal online synchronous learning.

## **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

Online synchronous learning is becoming important for education in the technology age (Chen & Jang, 2010). However, this

synchronous learning is new in Myanmar, so many teachers need to become more familiar with this learning (Mon, 2020; Myanmar Ministry of Education, 2021). Moreover, teachers can face some issues with technology and internet connection. Another issue is learning tools for OSL (White et al., 2010). Despite of challenges, there are some benefits to both teachers and students during the covid-19 pandemic through OSL. This literature review reviewed OSL tools, benefits, and challenges.

## **Online synchronous learning tools**

For online synchronous learning, both teachers and students need to access the following tools: the form of the text chat (Johnson, 2008; Lidstone & Shield, 2010; Oztok, Zingaro, Brett, & Hewitt, 2012; Szeto, 2015), video-conferencing (Cunningham, 2014; Okita, 2013; Spann, 2012; Wang, 2006), zoom (Moser & Smith, 2015), google forms such as google classroom, google hangouts, and google meet (Roseth et al., 2013). These tools can be used on computers, laptops, tablet PCs, and smartphones (Cain & Henriksen, 2013; Cunningham, 2014). The purposes of using all these learning tools are to promote students' learning in practical ways (Bower et al., 2014; Moser & Smith, 2015), communicate with students and teachers (Wang & Huang, 2018), make synchronous learning successful and capture teachers and students' face-to-face discussion (Bower et al., 2014; Park & Bonk, 2007).

Learning tools or platforms for OSL should have reliability and functionality (Stewart, Harlow, & DeBacco, 2011; White et al., 2010). Teachers should master in using all these tools and train students on how to use them. Through synchronous technologies, teachers and students can meet face-to-face for lesson discussion from different locations. However, failing or breaking during video-conferencing and audio transmission can be uncomfortable for students and can become a hindrance to the success of OSL activities (Okita, 2013; Pope, 2010; White et al., 2010). When

teachers use OSL tools effectively, both teachers and students receive benefits from synchronous learning.

### **The benefits of online synchronous learning**

During the covid 19 pandemic, online synchronous and asynchronous learning become widespread around the world. Students can continue their study from where they are and access educational information without spending much time (Moser & Smith, 2015). The OSL program can provide students to learn the way they learn in the classroom (Cunningham, 2014; Moser & Smith, 2015; Norberg, 2012), enable working students to continue their study (Pope, 2010), offer them more inclusive learning experiences (Cunningham, 2014), allow them for asking questions and discussion (White et al., 2010), and provide them opportunities for sharing knowledge with each other, supporting each other, and networking (Bower et al., 2014; Park & Bonk, 2007; Rogers, 2003). Students can ask the teacher questions and receive the feedback from the teacher in real time. They feel that teachers care of them and develop a stronger connection with their teachers as well as their friends, so they stay engaged with class activities (Francescucci & Rohani, 2019; Yamagata-Lynch, 2014).

Online synchronous learning has the possibility to expand the accessibility and flexibility of classes information and lesson units if the online synchronous classes are designed well (Zydneya, Warnera, & Angeloneb, 2020). In the findings of Papadima-Sophocleous and Loizides (2016), students felt that tutorials in videoconferencing helped them construct knowledge, experiences, and skills for their class lessons. Moreover, they felt comfort and reassurance because the lessons were uploaded in google platforms, so they were able to access the lessons 24/7. They received an opportunity to share their knowledge related to their lessons, their understanding of the lessons, and how they accomplished their assigned tasks. The online synchronous learning allowed both teachers and students observe the awareness and

interaction with each other and clarify misinterpretation or misconceptions that students may have in the lessons uploaded. Although the synchronous learning has benefits for both teachers and students, there are some challenges occurred during synchronous teaching and learning.

## **The challenges of online synchronous learning**

Despite the benefits of online synchronous learning, teachers and students face some problems and challenges in the synchronous learning. Before commencing teaching with online synchronous approach, teachers should consider their students' technical skills and familiarity with the online platforms for communication and learning (White et al., 2010). Less technical skills and unfamiliarity with the online platforms for communication and learning can cause challenges to both teachers and students (Cunningham, 2014; Szeto, 2015). Most students from remote area have experienced uncomfortable learning situations because of the technical capability of the software (Bower et al., 2014; Gillet-Swan, 2017; Salmon, 2014).

Engaging students in learning is a challenge to teachers because students have some personal issues that can hinder to focus on the lesson or to attend live tutorials (Stoessel et al., 2015). Although teachers provide a variety of lesson activities, if they feel that lesson activities make no sense for them, they will not engage in synchronous learning (Lidstone & Shield, 2010; Quevillon, 2021). A group working in synchronous learning is also a challenge for students when they are not physically present together in the same classroom (Quevillon, 2021). Students with inflexible schedule may not be able to collaborate in a group work (Lin & Gao, 2020; Olson & McCracken, 2015). Some students may not have enough time to reflect on the comments that they were supposed to make responses on time (Falloon, 2011).

For teachers, they feel that adopting tools for synchronous learning consume their time, teaching and learning will not be

effective (Roughton et al., 2011). In the OSL program, communication is not as immediate, so teachers may delay in answering students' questions, some students, therefore, feel vulnerable while waiting for teachers to respond. In this situation, students cannot receive the immediate feedback, so they may do their assignments the way they understand (Francescucci & Rohani, 2019).

In the findings of Lin and Gao (2020), the following challenges were happening during online synchronous learning:

1. Students could not follow the lesson explanation because the teacher explained it too fast.
2. Students faced difficulty to learn in their own pace.
3. Some students forgot to turn off their microphone so the distraction made the lesson explanation unclear.
4. Some students missed a live lesson explanation and delayed submitting their assignments due to the slow internet speed.
5. Some students are not familiar with learning management systems.
6. Students were exhausted due to a long time using the electronic device for learning.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The research perspective of this study is qualitative, which is a method used to study the natural social life in a systematic manner (Merriam, 2009; Saldana, 2011). Creswell and Creswell (2017) explain that qualitative research is an exploration and understanding of human's reaction to a social problem. It enables researchers to conduct in-depth studies about their topics (Yin, 2014). The study's epistemological underpinning was philosophical hermeneutics, which is the practice of comprehending and interpreting human realities or experiences (Bulhof, 1980). Epistemology is the study of knowledge and how people come to know or comprehend the truth (Knight, 2016).

## **Objectives**

The objectives of this study are to appreciate best practices of online synchronous learning and to design an ideal online synchronous learning in faith-based institutions in Myanmar. Since this study is qualitative research, we hope that the results of the study may be applied in any other schools, which launch online synchronous learning because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

## **Research questions**

To create an ideal online synchronous learning, we developed three research questions:

1. What best features and practices in the online synchronous learning at faith-based institutions can be appreciated?
2. What best features and practices can be envisioned in the online synchronous learning to create an “ideal online synchronous learning” at faith-based institutions?
3. How can we seek commitment to implement the “ideal” online synchronous learning in faith-based institutions?

We prepared semi-structured interviews to provide clarification on the interview questions. Each participant received the informed consent form before the interviews and observations take place. The interview process took 15-20 minutes, and the observations took 10-15 minutes for a month. After collecting the information, we proceeded data analysis process.

## **Methods**

The research type of this study is appreciative inquiry (AI), which “is based on the simple assumption that every organization has something that works well, and those strengths can be the starting point for creating positive change” (Cooperrider, Whitney, & Stavros, 2008, p. 3). The main function of AI is to make a positive change for organizations, departments, or teams. It has

four phases in its cycle: discovery, dream, design, and destiny (see figure 1).

**Discovery.** The discovery phase is to recognize and appreciate the best practices of what is. In this phase, people share their stories about their accomplishments and achievements, which are positive and strengths. During this phase of the inquiry, researchers emphasize on the best practices or facilities that organizations, teams, or schools have at the present time and appreciate them. In this way, the positive core of the main subject is reached and providing positive visions for further development (Cooperrider et al., 2008; Whitney, Trosten-Bloom, & Vianello, 2019).

**Dream.** The second phase of AI is a dream, which helps organizations, teams, or schools envision a brighter and better future. In this phase, people are more motivated to move forward because their achievements and best practices are appreciated, and they are encouraged to work alongside to imagine what result they will obtain if they continue working on their visions for the future. In this phase, people imagine their dreams and ambitions which are significant and beyond their current limits to develop their organization (Cooperrider et al., 2008; Whitney et al., 2019).

**Design.** In the design phase, the focus is creating an 'ideal' organization to achieve the dreams and ambitions that the organization envisions. Based on the best features and practices that the organization has, an 'ideal' organization is designed as new products in action. There are four steps in this design phase: selecting elements, identifying internal and external relationships, identifying themes, and writing stimulating propositions (Cooperrider et al., 2008).

**Destiny.** It is the final phase of the 4-D cycles of AI, and it presents the conclusion of the Discovery, Dream, and Design phases and the beginning of new products or ideas as an appreciative learning culture. This phase is to bring the dream comes true by implementing the ideal design for the organization. People are



encouraged to accomplish new levels of activity which is the 'ideal' design of the organization (Cooperrider et al., 2008).

## **Tools**

For data collection, we utilized the following instruments: observations and interviews to explore the best features and practices of online synchronous learning at two faith-based institutions. There are 9 participants included in this study. All of them participated willingly to share their experiences of OSL and to provide the dreams and ambitions to create an 'ideal' design for synchronous learning based on their present best practices. Teachers who have been experiencing OSL were interviewed.

## **Population**

This study was carried out at two faith-based institutions in Myanmar: high school and college levels. The focus of this study is to appreciate the best features and practices of online synchronous learning. The high school level has 35 faculty, and the college level has 40 faculty. All of them are practicing online synchronous learning since 2020 due to COVID-19. We selected three participants from high school level and six participants from college level. The participants are currently using OSL for teaching.

## **Ethical considerations**

In this study, we followed several ethical consideration guidelines, which enable us to think the ethical challenges in research and plan to eliminate them. All participants in this study received the informed consent form to understand about the study and to decide whether they are willing to participate in the study. They were informed that they can withdraw from the study any time without harm and danger. We explained them the purpose of the study, the procedure of data collection, the purpose of the research findings, how the data would be used, and how and where

the data would be kept. The research participants understood their names would not be mentioned, but pseudonym names would be used in the study to protect their identity. The findings of the study were shared with participants, school administrators, and teachers who are teaching online synchronous learning.

## **RESULTS**

In this section, we presented the findings of the study by using the cycle of appreciative inquiry: discovery, dream, design, and destiny. We answered the following research questions:

1. What best features and practices in the online synchronous learning at faith-based institutions can be appreciated?
2. What best features and practices can be envisioned in the online synchronous learning to create an “ideal online synchronous learning” at faith-based institutions?
3. How can we seek commitment to implement the “ideal” online synchronous learning in faith-based institutions?

In the discovery phase, three themes emerged; in the dream phase, two themes emerged; an ideal model of OSL was created in the design phase; and the implementation of the ideal model of OSL was presented in the destiny phase.

### **Discovery**

In the *Discovery* phase, we asked participants the best practices of online synchronous learning that they have experienced. All the participants shared their stories about their accomplishments and achievement that are positive and strengths. We, as researchers, emphasize on the best practices that schools have at the present time and appreciate them. There are three themes emerged in this *Discovery* phase: practical online platforms for learning, the benefits of online synchronous learning platforms, and students’ performance.

**Practical online platforms for learning.** Since the pandemic happening in Myanmar, most of the private schools were trying to initiate OSL. Among private schools, faith-based schools were able to launch OSL for high school and college levels. For online learning in Myanmar, teachers utilized online platforms that are available and practical for both teachers and learners. Teachers from where we collected data used the following online platforms for their teaching and learning processes: Facebook, messenger, gmail, google meet, zooms, WhatsApp, google classroom, and YouTube channel.

Participants in this study explained that they applied online platforms that were available and familiar with them. The reason is that the schools could not purchase online platform for ownership. Based on the interviews, most of the participants received online teaching training before they launch online classes. Bawa (2016) indicated that providing good training programs for online learning is needed for teachers before launching the programs. The school should spend more money, time, and effort on online learning training for empowering teachers to design online courses using various online platforms.

Participants H. and I. commented that online synchronous learning was new for every teacher in their school. Although teachers needed online teaching training before they launched online classes, they did not receive the training from the experts; they were assisting each other (San, 2021; Soe, 2021; White et al., 2010). Teaching materials such as laptops, computers, and internet connection were not enough for online teaching and learning.

Participant A. described, "When I heard to start an online learning, the first thing that came to my mind was where to get online teaching and learning training" (Vol. 1, p. 1). Participants B., D., and E. mentioned that teaching online classes were beyond their imagination because they did not have laptops for online teaching. What they needed was online teaching materials, including laptops and the internet connection as well as training. Participant G.

also said, “I thought about technology. I need to learn how to teach through online. If not, my teaching may not be affective for students” (Vol. 7, p. 1). Bower et al. (2014) and Moser and Smith (2015) discussed about the use of technology and tools for online learning. They explained that instructors and students should fathom how to access tools for online classes.

The online learning tools should have reliability and be usable (Stewart et al., 2011; White et al., 2010). Participants A., C., D., F., and G. mentioned that they used g-mail and Facebook messenger for online learning. As time goes by, they learned other useful online platforms such as google meet, google classroom, and zoom. Nevertheless, participants B. and E. explained that they were old and slow to learn technology, so they only use g-mail for uploading teaching and learning materials and submitting assignments. For live lesson explanation, they used the Facebook messenger room.

**The benefits of online synchronous learning platforms.** Participants shared the benefits of online synchronous learning platforms that they have been using for online classes. According to their experiences, some online platforms require payment, and some have limited numbers to use them. In this case, they looked for free and available online platforms for all. Facebook messenger allows only 8 people for live chat but google meet and zoom accept more people for live presentation and discussion. However, zoom is free for 45 minutes, and if it is used for more than 45 minutes, it requires payment. Google meet is the most useful platform for live lesson presentation.

Online classes are effective when they are designed well for flexibility and accessibility of each class and operating different online platforms assist students fathom the lessons (Papadima-Sophocleous & Loizides, 2016; Zydneya, Warnera, & Angeloneb, 2020). We listed the advantages of using online platforms that participants used for online classes. Google classroom was

accessible from all devices so students were able to use it without any problems. Participants used it for:

1. Uploading the lesson materials including videos that are needed for my classes.
2. Preparing class quizzes and assignments.
3. Setting up due dates for each class activity.
4. Submitting class activities.
5. Grading students' assignments.
6. Providing the feedback to each student on their assignments.

Facebook messenger and WhatsApp assist teachers for communicating, sending important messages, and reminding students what they need to do. Participant D. commented, "Facebook messenger is helpful for me because it helps me post my teaching materials, and I can use it for live lesson explanation. I can communicate well with my students" (Vol. 4, p. 2).

Zoom and google meet are helpful for live presentation and discussion (Cunningham, 2014; Moser & Smith, 2015; Roseth et al., 2013). 5 out of 9 participants remarked that zoom helps them to group students for group activities, and cooperative learning can be applied through online classes. When they practiced cooperative learning, students attentively listen to the live lesson explanations. Students are motivated to learn because they need to take their assigned responsibilities.

Participant I. said, "I can use google classroom and google meet effectively. I use messenger for conversations, sending link, or important information to students" (Vol. 9, p. 1). Participant F. also shared his experiences,

I use the platforms that are easy and effective for both teachers and students. I use OBS for video recordings, Facebook messenger for contacting my students because it is available and easy. Google classroom is for submitting students' assignments and uploading course materials. (Vol. 6, p. 2)

After teaching online classes for a semester, he learned a new platform, which is the YouTube channel for uploading the video. Participants G., H., and I. requested students to turn on their cameras during the live lesson presentation. The rest of the participants requested students to turn on their cameras only in the discussion time. They are constantly learning about online synchronous teaching and learning for the improvement of online classes.

Participant E. explained, "Google classroom is powerful for uploading class materials and submitting assignments. I can also give them the feedback and grade them. Google meet is very effective for live lesson presentation. I can share my PowerPoint lessons and explain them" (Vol. 2, p. 3). For designing online classes effective and interesting, teachers should develop teaching strategies such as creating a due date to submit students' assignments, providing feedback, and uploading activities with a clear explanation, including rubric (Bawa, 2016; Jaggars, 2014; Weber & Farmer, 2012). All participants are constantly learning and updating their online teaching processes to be effective.

**Students performance.** Due to the economy in Myanmar, most students could not purchase laptops, computer, or digital phone for online learning during this pandemic period. As a result, student enrollment is 40 % less than the normal enrollment before the pandemic. However, students who are enrolling for online classes perform effectively in their class activities. Most participants in this study said that they are satisfied with students' performances, although classes are through online. Some participants mentioned that they doubted whether students completed their assignments by themselves. Participant I. talked about the students' participations in online classes by explaining,

For me, my classes have a lot of practical projects. In fact-to-face classroom teaching, I can monitor them closely, they also can come to me. Through this synchronous learning, both teachers and students have a few challenges. I do not know that whether

they are doing their projects by themselves, or someone is helping them. (Vol. 9, p. 3)

Participants expounded that some of their students could not submit their assigned projects on time because of slow internet speed. Sometimes, distractions such as unclear voice and unable to turn on the camera due to slow internet speed can happen during live lesson presentations. Students enjoyed attending class meeting more than listening to the lesson videos. Participant B. shared the feedback from her students,

Attending class is good for them through google meet. They understand the lesson very well when they attend class meeting. Some students said that they don't listen to the lesson video from google classroom, but they like attending class and listen to my presentation. I showed them how to solve the problems. I always have class activities that can help their understanding. Through activities, they can remember and do their assignments. I am teaching business classes, so I showed them how to solve the angry customers. (Vol. 2, p. 3)

Participant D. shared her students' performances, "I use my time to teach them through messenger room for live lesson explanation; I encourage my students to do their best. I am satisfied with their performances in my class. I can see that they always try their best" (Vol. 4, p. 3). Participant G. also shared his students' performances, "I am satisfied with my students' performance in this online synchronous learning. I can see that they pay attention in every class meeting because these generations are interested in technology. They want to use gadgets all the time" (Vol. 7, p. 3). According to Bower et al. (2014) and Francescucci and Rohani (2019), when teachers explain the lessons and contact with students through video conferencing, students develop a healthy and fresh connection with their teachers and friends.

All the participants mentioned that students are well instructed on using online platforms for online classes, and they were fast learners because they were interested in using their gadgets.

Some students made excuses while live presentation was going on by informing the teachers that their phones were not working properly, or the connection was slow, or they could not hear what the teachers said.

## **Dream**

In the *Dream* phase, participants shared their expectations on online learning for a better improvement. They were constantly updating online platform for the development of teaching and learning processes. In this phase, two themes were emerged: improvements from schools and improvements from teachers.

**Improvements from schools.** Participants agreed with launching online synchronous learning during the pandemic time because they commented that if students could not continue their study during this pandemic, they would not know what to do because no jobs are available. However, participants provided some recommendations that the school could accomplish by providing the necessary equipment for online synchronous learning such as computer, laptops, and a Wi-Fi connection. Some research studies show that the achievements of teachers and students in teaching and learning are related to the leadership of school administrators (Day, Gu, & Sammons, 2016; Louis, Dretzke, & Wahlstrom, 2010). Park, Lee, and Cooc (2018) agreed with Day et al. (2016) and Louis et al. (2010) on the impact of school administrators in online teaching and learning as well as students' achievements.

Four out of nine participants mentioned that the school administrators should observe online teaching and plan a training for teachers if needed. Participant B. said, "I want to remind school administrations to follow up the teaching process of each teacher. If they set up rules and regulations for this online synchronous learning, all teachers should follow them. They should check whether teachers follow the rules" (Vol. 2, p. 4). Participant E. agreed with participant B. on what the school administrators should do by saying, "The administrators need to observe



teachers' teaching process to see whether teachers use online platforms effectively and successfully. If there is any problem in online teaching, then the administrators should solve the problem" (Vol. 5, p. 4). Participant G. continued,

What I wanted the school to do is that to group the slow learner in technology and give a close training on using online platforms. If it is possible, one by one tutoring will be effective for those who are slow in learning. Observation is needed for teaching and learning. (Vol. 7, P. 5)

Participant F. explained what he wanted the school administrators prepare as follows:

If we continue teaching through the OSL program, the school should provide all the devices that are needed for online classes for teachers. Then, if we plan to use the cloud, the school needs to buy storage for cloud. For instance, 6 teachers per one storage cloud. It will be good if the school can buy more storages. I want Microsoft team platform for online teaching. If we can use a Microsoft team platform with license, it will be very good. Teachers can communicate with students, post course materials, and everything there. I believe that it will be effective for teaching and learning. (Vol. 6, p. 4)

Participants discussed about how they commenced online teaching. Although they received online teaching training, some teachers faced problems with technology. For this reason, the school administrators should organize a meeting once a month to allow teachers to share their online teaching experiences with each other. Zincirli (2021) indicated that the school administrators have obligations in planning and launching online teaching, observing teachers' teaching process, and providing the necessary training for teachers. Participant H. commended, "Besides online teaching training, if it is possible, I want the school administrators to provide internet access in my house because I want to be available anytime when my students need clarification on my lessons" (Vol. 8, p. 4). In the findings of Zircirli's (2021) study, the research

participants mentioned that school administrators need to improve the internet infrastructure for making online teaching and learning more efficient. School administrators generate competencies and characteristics to meet the needs of online teaching.

**Improvements from teachers.** For better online classes, teachers need to constantly learn and update online teaching materials for classes. They should prepare the class lessons using PowerPoints and videos to make online classes effective and interesting. All participants agreed to prepare the class lessons in effective ways. Participant B. mentioned, “In my opinion, when teachers prepare the class lessons, they should use PowerPoints and videos to make the lesson understandable. Using pictures and samples is also effective for students learning” (Vol. 2, p. 5). Participant C. also explained what he has been doing,

For me, I need to update all my lectures every semester. I am doing it now. I am updating my class based on the up-to-date information, the real situation. We should not use the same materials all the time. The world is changing. We need to check the real world and update our class materials. I know we need to spend more time to do that. (Vol. 3, p. 5)

Participant H. shared his experiences,

I am teaching and learning at the same time. I constantly inquire more about how to make my online teaching to be active. I am learning how to use teaching structures, strategies, and methods in effective ways. I am continuously looking for useful tools for online synchronous learning. I realize that some teachers do not know how to share a PowerPoint lesson in zoom. (Vol. 8, p. 6)

Several studies show that teachers experienced some challenges in online teaching such as the lack of knowledge in using hardware and software (Bakioğlu & Çevik, 2021), internet connection during the live presentation (Lin & Gao, 2020), and limited internet access for both teachers and students (Çakın & Külekçi Akyavuz, 2020). Although challenges appeared, participants 5 out

of 9 explained that the class live meeting is needed besides sending class lessons to students. Some students can learn when teachers explain the class lessons directly to them. The research studies from Bawa (2016) and Wong (2017) indicated that having a video conferencing with zoom or google meet with students fosters more comfortable social interaction between students and teachers; moreover, students can grasp the ideas of the lesson units. Participants in this study revealed that if there is no class meeting, some students may not be able to complete their assignments. They ensured that students understood the lesson and completed all assignments without difficulties.

Participants experienced that some students copied from others and submitted their assignments. They thought that it happened because students did not understand the class well, so they copied from others instead of asking teachers. Participant A. explained,

When I checked my students' papers, I found out that some students had the same answers. So, I messaged them and asked them who was the original, then I excused the original person. I spent time to explain those who did not understand the lessons and assignments. I allowed them to do it again. I want them to understand and apply them in their real life. (Vol. 1, p. 6)

Teachers help each other in online teaching. They try their best for this online synchronous learning during this pandemic period. They continue learning and seeking for improvements for online classes. Participant I said,

We have crisis in everything this time, so I allow my students to submit their assignments in an essay way, for example, they write down on the paper and take a picture of it, then submit it to me. Not all students have laptops. Teachers need to make them feel comfortable with online learning. (Vol. 9, p. 6)

Teachers should plan for continuous learning to improve their teaching and participate in designing and implementing the OSL

program. School administrators need to cooperate with teachers for enhancing the quality of online teaching (Cisneros-Cohernour, 2021; Sterrett, 2015; Wong, 2017).

## **Design**

After sharing the participants' dreams for online teaching, participants designed an ideal online synchronous learning as a new model in action. In this design phase, we selected themes, identified internal and external relationships of the selected themes, and wrote stimulating propositions. The following items were selected for the ideal online synchronous learning:

1. Finding best practices
  - a. Online learning platforms
  - b. Benefits of online learning
  - c. Students' performance
2. Seeking improvements from schools
  - a. Observations
  - b. Training for online learning
  - c. Internet speed
3. Seeking improvements from teachers
  - a. Continuous learning
  - b. Sharing experiences
  - c. Assisting each other

Based on the above items, we designed the ideal OSL and displayed it to participants. We obtained the feedback from the participants and finalized the ideal OSL (*see Figure 2*).

## **Destiny**

The destiny phase is the conclusion of the *Discovery, Dream, and Design* phases. In this phase, we designed a new ideal model of online synchronous learning and encouraged teachers and administrators to implement it. We provided that the cycle of an ideal online synchronous learning to the selected participants and asked them how they can accomplish it. All participants

mentioned that they will follow each step of the cycle of an ideal online synchronous learning.

Participant C. commented, “I am glad that now we have the cycle of an ideal online synchronous learning. School administrators and teachers must work together to implement it. We need to agree with each other, discuss, and make decisions for a better improvement” (Vol. 3, p. 6). Participant F. added, “To improve online synchronous learning and accomplish the ideal plan, the administrators and teachers need to know how to accomplish each part of the ideal plan and act it out” (Vol. 6, p. 6).

Participants agreed that working cooperatively is crucial for implementing the ideal OSL. Participant H. recommended,

Because of our country situation now and the pandemic, we will continue teaching through online, so we need to look for a better improvement in teaching and learning. For this reason, we must understand and implement the ideal online synchronous learning. In order to implement it, we need to have the same vision and goal for making online learning effective and successful. (Vol. 8, p. 6)

Participant I. suggested, “We have staff worship through zoom, so anything that is important can be reported to the school administration. The administrators are the main assets to implement the ideal plan” (Vol. 9, p. 6). All the participants realized that both school administrators and teachers must cooperate in implementing the ideal plan for online synchronous learning.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

Online synchronous learning is a substitution for face-to-face learning in Myanmar during COVID -19 pandemic. Although teachers and students needed to become more familiar with this learning process, they learned rapidly and made it into practice. The OSL program has been practiced since 2020 in Myanmar. The participants in this study appreciated what they had been practicing

for online learning. They keep learning new platforms that will be available and useful for online learning for teachers and students.

Based on the collected data, participants shared their experiences and dreams about online teaching and the ideal model for designing better learning online. Since this study employed an appreciative inquiry, participants have positive visions to improve their learning. They are enthusiastic about designing the ideal model for OSL and implementing the model that they designed. We have learned that appreciative inquiry motivates people to move forward, see better results, and simultaneously empower themselves and others.

After analyzing the data, we designed the ideal model for a better OSL. We displayed it to all participants and allowed them if they wanted to correct or add more information. The ideal model includes six steps (see figure 2). It shows school administrators and teachers what they should do to implement the ideal model for improvement in online learning. Finally, we shared the model with school administrators and teachers who have been practicing online learning and are interested in it.

We recommend that school administrators carefully examine this study's findings and the ideal online synchronous learning cycle. They should encourage teachers to put the study's findings into practice. School administrators provide training online synchronous learning to teachers. Additionally, administrators and teachers at the school should keep track of any changes that result from using the cycle of an ideal online synchronous learning.

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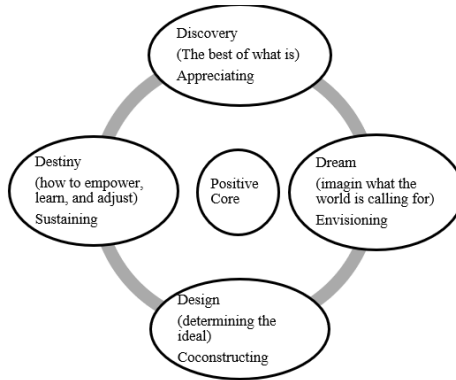
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# APPENDICES

**Figure 1**

*The appreciative inquiry model*



**Figure 2**

*The cycle of an ideal online synchronous learning*

