



## Virtual Classroom Management Best Practices of Grade School Teachers of St. Paul University Surigao: A Phenomenology

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.69481/AUSN5328>

### Abstract

This hermeneutic interpretive phenomenological study explored the lived experiences of grade school teachers managing virtual classes during the COVID-19 pandemic at St. Paul University Surigao. Eleven teachers from various grade levels were interviewed, and data was analyzed using interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA). Five emergent themes were identified: 1) Teachers' perception of classroom management, 2) Teachers' authority and management of virtual classes, 3) Benefits of online classes, 4) Challenges in conducting virtual classes, and 5) Best virtual classroom management practices. The study found that teachers demonstrated resilience and adaptability in transitioning to online teaching, while highlighting both the benefits (e.g., flexibility, cost savings) and challenges (e.g., internet connectivity, student engagement) of virtual classrooms. Based on these findings, a "Simulacrum" model of best practices for virtual classroom management, aligned with the university's vision and values, was proposed. The study offers valuable insights for educators navigating online teaching and emphasizes the importance of continued support and professional development in this evolving landscape.

**Keywords:** Virtual Classroom Management, Lived Experiences, Online Learning, COVID-19, Best Practices

### 1. Introduction

The Philippine education system was also tremendously affected when the world was surrounded by the coronavirus infection called COVID-19. The implementation of the teaching and learning process rapidly switched into modular distance learning. Educational institutions shifted to online education, which led to a massive adjustment of learners' learning and teachers' classroom management.

Education must not be stopped, even during times of crisis, such as war, quarantine, emergency, or calamity, as emphasized by the Secretary of the Philippines' Department of Education, Leonor Briones (Department of Education, 2020). Aligned with this, the St. Paul University Surigao Basic Education Department, under the leadership of the University President, Sr. Marie Rosanne Mallillin, implements a Paulinian Remote Flexible Learning Experience or ReFLEX. SPUS provides a more adaptive and inclusive Flexible Distance Learning Education System to address the challenges of delivering instruction and sustainability of education amidst the pandemic for the school year 2020-2021. They provide various learning modes that give learners choices of their learning preferences; these may be through face-to-face learning, online learning, or blended learning. As part of the Paulinian ReFLEX, last August 2, 2021, the school welcomed the new school year, implementing online teaching and learning modalities. Online learning is one of the many ways to continue education in times of uncertainty like the COVID-19 pandemic. Though it is a good platform, challenges that affect students and teachers were encountered (Belgica et al., 2020).

The research of Montelongo (2019) revealed that an increasing group of online educators emphasized the significance of creating a critical online pedagogy to reconsider the virtual education concerns on fairness, social

justice, and transformative learning experiences in virtual learning spaces. Martin & Sass (2010) defined classroom management as the general daily maintenance of the classroom, which includes classroom rules for student input during instructional time and the types of reward systems used. Some teachers have classroom management practices that positively impact the learners' performance, on the other hand, some methods may affect learners' performance negatively. However, little is known about how classroom management impacts student outcomes by teacher classroom management style. Colavecchio & Miller (2002); and Etheridge (2010) mentioned that classroom disciplinary issues are worse than those in the past, which has impacted student achievement. Classroom management issues have a devastating impact on learners' achievement.

Lamb (2021) mentioned that when a global pandemic altered the delivery of instruction to students, teachers across the world experienced a forced change. Teachers were expected to continue providing instruction to the learners across a virtual platform since school buildings were not open. Therefore, the researcher conducted a phenomenological study on the virtual classroom management practices of grade school teachers in a university to understand the teachers' lived experiences in conducting virtual classes amidst the pandemic as part of ReFLEX implementation. Hence, the researcher could benefit from the shared challenges and opportunities experienced by the informants of this study.

In the local setting, St. Paul University Surigao implemented online learning as part of Paulinian ReFLEX. Virtual classes or the Interactive Teacher-Directed Station, were conducted through various videoconferencing platforms, namely Google Meets, Zoom Meetings, Google Classrooms, etc. Therefore, teachers are modifying their way of managing their classes since the classroom management practices they used to apply in a face-to-face class setting switched to a virtual class. Thus, teachers had various ways of managing the virtual classrooms and dealing with their students through online distance learning. Through this phenomenological study, the teacher informants could share their best classroom management practices, which other teachers conducting online classes can benchmark.

The sudden shift to online education was unexpected due to the pandemic. Thus, the mentioned circumstances in which some teachers are making massive adjustments in managing virtual classrooms encouraged the researcher to find out how the teachers manage virtual classes. Hence, this phenomenological study aimed to explore the lived experiences of grade school teachers on virtual classroom management practices amid the pandemic. In the latter, this phenomenological study proposes a simulacrum of the virtual classroom management best practices of teachers that will help lead to the effective implementation of online distance learning.

### *Research Questions*

The purpose of this phenomenological study is to explore the lived experiences of grade school teachers in conducting virtual classes during the COVID-19 pandemic. Specifically, this study aims to address the following questions:

1. What are the lived experiences of the grade school teachers in managing virtual classes amidst the pandemic?
2. What essence and meanings can be derived from the informant's lived experiences?
3. What are the emergent themes that can be drawn from the prevailing codes of the lived experiences of the grade school teachers in managing virtual classes?
4. Based on the findings of the study, what simulacrum of virtual classroom management practices may be proposed?

## **2. Literature Review**

Literature and studies related to this phenomenological study of virtual classroom management practices of grade school teachers amidst the pandemic are presented in this part. The Covid-19 pandemic has become a major global health concern. As of October 6, 2020, almost 325,000 have been infected, and 6,000 have died in the Philippines (Worldometer, 2020). Consequently, more than a billion learners have been affected worldwide. More than 28 million Filipino learners at all academic levels are required to adhere to stay home and comply with the Philippine government's quarantine measures (UNESCO, 2020).

During viral outbreaks, online learning is one viable way to continue learning at a distance. Joaquin et al. (2020) emphasized that online learning is one of the delivery modes of distance education. Hooks (2003), defined distance education as any form of learning experience where the learner and the teacher are physically separated. Amidst the growing tension about the pandemic, learning should never stop. Online learning is one of the several distant learning modalities implemented to fill in the gaps in continuing learning without physical contact. According to Meşe, E. & Sevilen, Ç. (2021), due to the COVID-19 pandemic, educators and students have been left with uncertainty, and the online courses in this context were implemented on short notice. Due to this unpredictable happening, many questions emerged asking the effectiveness of online teaching and its impact on the teachers and students. During the International Conference of E-Learning 2016, cited from Brown (2015, p. 1), it was stated that over the last two decades, online higher education has resulted in an increasing number of programs and learners, leading some to claim that it suits the preferred or 'new normal' mode of learning throughout the world.

According to Montelongo (2019), online distance learning has become a mode of course delivery in higher education institutions. Online educators use diverse technical tools to facilitate content delivery, foster connections between students and teachers, and offer insights, comments, and discussions regarding course assignments and activities for effective online teaching (Baran, Correia, & Thompson, 2011; Herie, 2005). A growing number of online educators understand the significance of creating critical online pedagogy. to reconsider how online education challenges social justice, equity, and transformative learning opportunities in online learning environments (Montelongo, 2019). Teaching Practices Casement (2013) cited, "How far the transformation from traditional teaching to virtual classrooms will go remains to be seen, but it is well in progress." If transformation continues to increase on college campuses, thorough thinking of pedagogical strategies in virtual classrooms is vital. High-impact teaching practices include helping students become meta-learners, learning-centered course design, strongly using small groups, service-learning/community engagement with reflection; and students' being leaders.

Kounin's Classroom Management Theory (1970) supported the development of this study. This theory shifts the focus from reactive strategies to preventative strategies. The teacher prevents undesirable behaviors from occurring and fosters more desirable behaviors instead. As a result of his study, Kounin (1970) coined the terms "with-it-ness" and "momentum" (p. 56). With-it-ness is characterized as a well-organized classroom where the teacher knows what is happening, implements procedures that allow lessons to flow smoothly and maintains learning momentum. In support, his research on classroom management began when he observed 49 first- and second-grade classrooms. Each class full-day performance was recorded through video and the behavior of selected students was coded for work involvement (called "engagement" today) every 12 seconds. Kounin concludes that great classroom management is not based on the behavior of the learners but rather on the behavior of educators. The teacher behaviors that produced student learning are the following: (a) With-it-ness, which means that the "with-it" teacher knows what is always happening. Kounin emphasized that teachers are not required to be aware of what is happening, but merely for students to notice that the teacher knows what is happening in the classroom. (b) Overlapping is when the teachers can multitask various activities smoothly without being distracted from or preoccupied with one activity or student. (c) Smoothness and Momentum refer to when the teachers move through a lesson smoothly without being diverted or interrupted by student seatwork. (d) Group alerting when teachers keep students alert and attentive. This is Kounin's belief of classroom management: teachers' behavior produces student learning. It is related in the present study since the researcher aims to know the virtual classroom management practices that improve learners' performance. According to Kavrayici (2021), classrooms are educational settings where students and instructors work together to achieve goals. In educational systems, effective management of the goal-achievement process is crucial. Classroom management is significant in the development of quality instruction during distance education. It helps to build community in online classrooms (DiPietro et al., 2008). Allen (2010) stated that classroom management used to be conceptualized as managing learners' misbehavior and discipline of the class. However, building an effective learning environment goes beyond the systematic method of managing misbehavior and keeping students under control. It was stated in the study of Saifi et al. (2018) on the impact of classroom management on learners' academic achievement at the university

level in Punjab that there was an insignificant difference in the opinions of male and female students about classroom management. This study was descriptive. Results showed more than half of the learners had high achievement; lack of physical facilities was the major problem in classroom management. It was recommended that the latest technologies be present in the classrooms to facilitate the learners' strict and transparent implementation of rules, regulations, and schedules. The aims of the study were; to investigate learners' perceptions of classroom management at the university level, to know the impact of classroom management on learners' achievement, and to give suggestions for improving classroom management at the university level.

Another related study is the research of Nisar et al. (2019) on the relationship between classroom management and students' academic achievement. This correlational research focuses on the relationship between the classroom management practices used by secondary school teachers and the learners' academic achievement. It was revealed that a good relationship between teacher's practices and learners's achievement is a vital and basic element for the school's high academic scores. Therefore, it was recommended that secondary school teachers must have training in classroom management strategies to increase their capacities, which may lead to ensuring learners' learning. Sumalinog et. al., (2022) phenomenological study on learning management in a virtual classroom explored online learning management experiences of college educators amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, which is very related to this current phenomenological study. This study analyzes the data of the lived experiences of the selected ten (10) college instructors in Central Visayas in the Philippines using the Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA). Three (3) emerging themes were developed, namely (a) the lows, (b) the highs, and (c) the gains from the online learning setup. The findings showed that due to poor grading bases, learning management failed since there was no assurance that students were honest in doing the tasks. The informants also observed the students' abysmal participation and inappropriate behavior. On the other hand, they also mentioned that online classroom management was easy, and they have gained practical financial benefits. The research of Hooper, 2023, on the best practices of virtual learning for K-5 students is another study related to this phenomenological study. The goal is to explore the K-5 virtual educators' strategies and best practices, the challenges of teaching virtually the K-5 students, and how educators track learning progress. Using the phenomenological method the data was gathered through an interview of 12 k-5 virtual educators. As a result, it was stated that through interactive resources and community-building activities, virtual educators can sustain students' academic and social achievement through engaging and synchronous education. The researcher developed a training course for pre-service teachers based on the findings.

These related literature and studies, tell us how the pandemic affects the teaching and learning delivery mode that switch to online distance learning. Other research also showed us the effect of online distance learning which is the modification of classroom management practices. In the latter part, studies on classroom management practices and their relation to the learners' achievement were also mentioned. These studies showed similarities to this study in some parts, however, this study may fill in the gaps between the mentioned studies above, since this research aims to explore virtual classroom management practices amid the pandemic.

### 3. Methodology

This qualitative phenomenological research design aimed to explore the lived experiences of grade school teachers at Saint Paul University Surigao (SPUS) in managing virtual classes during the pandemic (Ramsook, 2018). The study utilized a Hermeneutic interpretive phenomenological approach to understand the phenomenon of the teachers' experiences within the context of the Paulinian Remote Flexible Learning Experience (ReFLEX). The study participants were grade school teachers at SPUS who had been conducting virtual classes for at least two school years and possessed a minimum of three years of teaching experience. An Exponential Discriminative Snowball Sampling technique was employed, where initial participants suggested additional potential participants, and the researcher selected those who best aligned with the research objectives. Data collection involved several steps, initiated by obtaining necessary permissions through a Letter of Request to the Dean of the Graduate School, a Permission Letter to the Basic Education Principal, and a Letter of Consent from the participants. The researcher, acting as the primary instrument, conducted structured interviews with predetermined questions. These interviews were conducted both online (via Google Meet, Messenger, or Zoom) and face-to-face, and were audio-

recorded with participant consent. The researcher then transcribed the interviews for subsequent analysis. Data analysis followed the Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) steps outlined by Pietkiewicz and Smith (2012). This involved multiple readings of the transcripts, identification of emergent themes, and clustering of themes based on conceptual similarities. Ethical considerations were paramount throughout the study. Participants were assigned pseudonyms to ensure anonymity. Confidentiality and proper data handling were maintained. The researcher, an outsider to the SPUS community, took precautions to avoid bias in data interpretation. The use of snowball sampling might limit the generalizability of the findings. Additionally, the researcher's position as an outsider, while helping to minimize bias, might also have limited their understanding of the specific context within SPUS. Overall, this study aimed to provide valuable insights into the experiences of grade school teachers navigating the challenges of virtual teaching during the pandemic, and to identify potential best practices within the context of the Paulinian ReFLEX.

#### 4. Results and Discussions

**Table 1. Profile of the Teacher Informants**

Pseudonym	Grade Level	Years Taught	Years Taught Virtually
Alex	Grades 4,5, & 6	7	2
Bea	Nursery	11	2
Carla	Grade 3	5	2
Donna	Grade 2	5	2
Elsa	Grade 4	5	2
Felly	Grades 1,2, & 6	3	2
George	Grades 3, 4,5	6	2
Hazel	Grade 4	3	2
Irish	Grade 5	3	2
Jane	Kindergarten	4	2
Kent	Grade 1,3,5, & 6	3	2

The data provided in table 1 shows a range of teaching experiences across different grade levels, from nursery to grade 6, with teachers having between 3 and 11 years of classroom experience. Bea, with 11 years of experience, is the most seasoned, while Felly, Hazel, and Irish each have 3 years, representing the least experienced teachers in the group. Despite the variation in classroom experience, all teachers share 2 years of virtual teaching experience, suggesting they likely began online instruction during the COVID-19 pandemic. This uniformity in virtual teaching experience highlights that their exposure to and adaptation of virtual methodologies occurred at the same time, regardless of how long they had been teaching overall. Teachers such as Alex, Felly, George, and Kent teach multiple grade levels, indicating their ability to cater to diverse student needs, while Bea and Jane focus solely on early childhood education, which requires specialized teaching approaches for younger learners. Teachers with more years of physical classroom experience, such as Bea, may have found the transition to virtual learning more challenging than newer teachers like Hazel, Irish, and Felly, who might have been more adaptable to new routines and technologies. Additionally, teachers handling multiple grades, such as Alex and Kent, may have faced unique challenges in creating lessons suitable for a wide range of student abilities in a virtual setting. Overall, this group reflects a blend of experienced and newer teachers, all adapting to the relatively new demands of virtual instruction in their respective contexts.

**Table 2. Summary of the Emergent Themes and Subthemes**

EMERGENT THEMES	SUBTHEMES
Emergent Theme 1. Teachers'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Orderliness and Structured Environment</li> </ul>

perception of classroom management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Discipline and Positive Behavior Management</li> <li>● Effective Instructional Management and Control</li> </ul>
Emergent Theme 2. Teachers' Authority and management of virtual classes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Efficiency of Facilitating Virtual Classes</li> <li>● Limitations on the actual conduct of Virtual Classes</li> </ul>
Emergent Theme 3. Benefits of Online Classes during the pandemic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Cost and Time Savings</li> <li>● Learning Continuity</li> <li>● Flexibility and Skill Development</li> <li>● Convenience and Safety</li> </ul>
Emergent Theme 4. Challenges in Conducting Virtual Classes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Internet Connectivity Challenges</li> <li>● Learning Progress and Follow-ups</li> </ul>
Emergent Theme 5. Best Virtual Classroom Management Practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Adaptability in Technology Use and Utilization of appropriate Online Platforms</li> <li>● Virtual Classroom Management Techniques</li> </ul>

Table 2 summarizes the emerging themes drawn from the informants' responses. Each theme will be discussed further since it consists of various subthemes derived from the data gathered. The first emerging theme from the data is the Teacher's Perception of Classroom Management. Orderliness and Structured Environment. This is the teachers' belief about classroom management, as we employ various strategies to facilitate education, guaranteeing that students learn optimally in a peaceful classroom environment. We always consider the classroom as home and create a conducive learning environment. The teacher as a good classroom manager structured the class in a way that orderliness is maintained in the classroom (Isuku, 2018). Classroom management is an orderly and organized learning environment where teachers can teach, and students can learn (Marley, 2016). Moreover, I believe that teachers play a crucial role in organizing the classroom, ensuring orderliness, and creating an environment that supports effective learning. Classroom management involves creating a conducive teaching and learning environment by maintaining the orderliness of the classroom. Therefore, based on the result of this study with the supporting studies, the teachers perceived classroom management as creating a conducive learning environment where learners feel comfortable and empowered to learn. Classroom management entails comprehensive guidelines for maintaining learner behavior during class. The Teacher's Perception of Classroom Management is Discipline and Positive Behavior management is the second subtheme formed. Classroom Management is to prevent students' disruptive behavior to ensure classroom lessons run smoothly (Isuku, 2018). Part of effective classroom management is Positive Discipline, Stevens (2018) mentioned that, by exploring various classroom management techniques, he found positive discipline fascinating and fit his goal. It is an essential part of classroom management, as most teachers can relate that discipline is integral to managing a classroom, ensuring that students exhibit appropriate behavior for effective learning. Teachers also perceived Classroom Management as Effective Instructional Management and Control. Teachers should ensure effective classroom management and control and use relevant instructional methods to help students learn in the most appropriate environment (Isuku, 2018). I agree, since teachers need effective strategies to manage and control students, guiding them toward the intended educational objectives. Furthermore, managing and controlling students during teaching leads to achieving the lesson goals. With the result and supporting literature, the teachers' perception of classroom management is about the significance of instructional management and class control in achieving the lesson objectives.

The second emerging theme from the gathered data is the Teachers' Authority and virtual classes management. The teachers experienced efficiency in facilitating virtual classes. They believe on the simplicity of preparing materials on the screen for a virtual class. There is an ease of managing classes virtually since there is a presence of adults at home, which reduces the teacher's direct responsibility for student behavior. Online learning is efficient during the COVID-19 situation since education can be continued even amidst the pandemic, is easy to administer, and accessible and teachers have the authority to mute/unmute mics (Mukhtar et. al, 2020). Online Learning amidst the pandemic offers teachers an efficient way to deliver lessons to students, allows learners to access them anytime, and reduces financial costs (Esteron, 2021). Less effort is required in supervising classes and



implementing proper etiquette and behavior during virtual classes. Thus, the teacher's ability to navigate and utilize digital tools with the help of adults at home plays a crucial role in easily facilitating effective online distance learning. On the other hand, Teachers' Authority and Management of the actual conduct of virtual classes has limitations. The ability to interact physically between teachers and learners and respond immediately is restricted. Online education undergoes various obstacles which include insufficient hardware equipment for online learning, the learning management system being faulty, and low student self-control (Talebipoura et. al, 2023). This is the common limitation encountered by teachers in conducting virtual classes as students' responsiveness, interaction, and engagement are very limited since cameras are closed and we are only interacting through the screen. There is also difficulty in handling internet connectivity issues and limited assistance to students with their lessons. Insufficient reliable internet access and the incapability of utilizing technology make online learning a difficult experience (Flynn & Himel, 2020). Similar statements with the results also are found in the study of Al-Qahtani (2019) who says that online classes have a limited presence.

The third emerging theme from the data gathered is the Benefits of Online Classes during the pandemic. Online classes eliminate the need for commuting, reducing costs for students, saving time, and contributing to overall efficiency. The teacher informants cited Cost and Time Savings as the benefits of online classes during the pandemic. Both students and teachers can save time and money with online education since they don't have to come to school (Mukhtar et al., 2020) (Fatonia et al., 2020). Online classes help teachers reduce waiting time. Instead, they have a more direct focus on instructional activities. Furthermore, teachers experienced uninterrupted learning during the pandemic, traffic reduction, cost savings, and the quick dissemination of information. This shows that teachers have more efficient use of time and cost savings and can have a more direct focus on teaching preparations. Online classes during the pandemic have positive aspects, emphasizing the development of learners' independence, and the ability to continue education remotely, regardless of location or time. One of the benefits of online classes during the pandemic shared by the teacher informants is learning continuity. As a teacher, I also viewed online classes as ensuring that education does not stop, uncovering new skills, and promoting academic resiliency. Continuous learning is important in these challenging times. The possible way to address the disruption of classes and promote learning continuity amidst the pandemic is to switch to online delivery of lessons (Dayagbil et. al, 2021). Abdulkareem et. al., (2020) also agreed with the result which states that online learning system platforms and applications are beneficial during covid-19 pandemic. Therefore, online classes during the pandemic have advantages, particularly in how online platforms provide a valuable avenue to continue the process of teaching and learning. Online classes during the pandemic have significant benefits such as uncovering additional skills, specifically academic resiliency and technical skills. Flexibility and skill development are great gains of online classes during the pandemic. Online experiences provide teachers opportunities for skill development, technological skill acquisition, and self-improvement (Iradel et al., 2021). Virtual education during the pandemic has multifaceted benefits emphasizing flexibility, time management, and the opportunity for teachers to enhance their technological skills. The teacher informants also mentioned Convenience and Safety as benefits of online classes during the pandemic. The great advantage of the virtual classroom is its Cost-effectiveness, it saves money, time, and transport for students, where they can work on their own in their home environment without spending too much time and money to go to school (Ogunode et. al, 2021). Moreover, these are also consistent with the study of Parentela et. Al (2021) says the conversion of face-to-face classes to online platforms proved to be the best decision to secure the safety of all persons participating in the teaching-learning process. Consequently, these are teachers' benefits from online classes during the pandemic; cost-saving as students no longer need to commute to school, safety as they have the advantage of avoiding exposure to COVID-19, and self-paced learning. Online classes amid the pandemic have significant benefits, emphasizing their effectiveness in facilitating continued learning for students while ensuring their safety.

The fourth emerging theme from the data gathered is the Challenges in Conducting Virtual Classes. Internet Connection is the challenges that most of the teacher informants experienced in conducting virtual classes. It is a major challenge encountered by teachers during virtual classes amidst the pandemic: unreliable internet connections and reduced pupil interaction. It emphasizes the detrimental impact of poor connectivity on instruction delivery, hindering clear communication and instruction. The greatest challenge in teaching and learning continuity during the pandemic is technological challenges particularly internet connection especially for

far-flung areas where the learners' majority cannot accomplish the assigned tasks due to a lack of access to the internet and the deficiency of suitable gadgets to use. These results also mirrored the study of Dayagbil et. al (2021) stated, that the learners believed that when face-to-face classes were discontinued their home environment was not conducive to learning since many disruptions were experienced including internet connectivity. Another challenge that most of the teacher informants experienced in conducting virtual classes is the Learners' Learning Progress and Follow-ups. These mentioned demerits are very similar to the findings of Stevenson (2022), that challenges in an online classroom of an elementary teacher particularly the difficulty in monitoring student progress, poor student follow-ups at home, and tracking down student work. This happens in an actual setting, teachers are concerned about uncertainties in students' learning progress, delayed responses, and difficulties in ensuring parental involvement to discuss challenges in conducting effective follow-ups.

The fifth emerging theme from the data is the Best Virtual Classroom Management Practices. These include the following subthemes: Adaptability in Technology Use and Utilization of Appropriate Online Platforms and Virtual Classroom Management Techniques. Online platforms have their best feature that helps the teacher provide quality online instruction. The teacher informants mentioned Adaptability in Technology Use and Utilization of Appropriate Online Platforms as their best practices. Online education helps teachers use various available online educational resources, and find an easy and systematic way of recording each student's learning progress, that makes facilitating virtual classes efficient (Talebipoura, et. al, 2023). Mastery of online platforms is required for effective classroom management of virtual classes during the pandemic. The ability to mute all students, preventing interruptions and maintaining order, is highlighted as a practical strategy that may not be easily achievable in face-to-face settings. The students being guided by their parents during virtual classes adds support to a more controlled and focused learning environment. Thus, Teachers' effective classroom management practices in the context of virtual classes emphasize the adaptability and resourcefulness in utilizing technology specifically using the Quipper platform and other online tools like Google Docs in which assessments and grading are automated and organized. Classroom management best practices for virtual classes during the pandemic through the use of netiquette in maintaining appropriate behavior and having planned instructions is an effective way to provide a quality online education. Teachers' Virtual Classroom Management Technique is also the best practice cited by the teacher informants. Teachers can provide high-quality education to learners through effective online learning sessions (El Tarhouny et. al, 2021). The vital way to achieve these successful online classes is through setting routines and appropriate rules of etiquette for online behavior. In addition, Stevenson (2022) elaborated that virtual education at the elementary level works best when there is an existing partnership between the parent, child, and teacher. I also believe that practices, such as implementing virtual routines, applying netiquette, using signals, being consistent with rules, providing rewards and consequences, involving parents, and making classes engaging are the best practices in facilitating virtual classes. These are the teachers' ways of providing efficient instruction through virtual classes. Consistent communication and rule enforcement in virtual classes during the pandemic is a key to effective virtual classroom management.

This section also offers concise answers to the research questions posed in this phenomenological study. The answers are reflective of the perception of the informants. Data from the responses of the informants were all considered in determining answers to all questions. The lived experiences of grade school teachers in managing virtual classes amidst the pandemic. Based on the result of the shared experiences of the teacher informants, their overall perspective is that teaching virtually at the grade school level amidst the pandemic has lots of challenges, on the other hand, it has various advantages too. All informants expressed how resilient and flexible they are, as they respond to the COVID-19 pandemic by embracing the sudden switch from face-to-face classes to virtual classes. Informants agreed that managing classes effectively even during virtual classes is important to achieve educational goals and learning continuity amidst the pandemic.

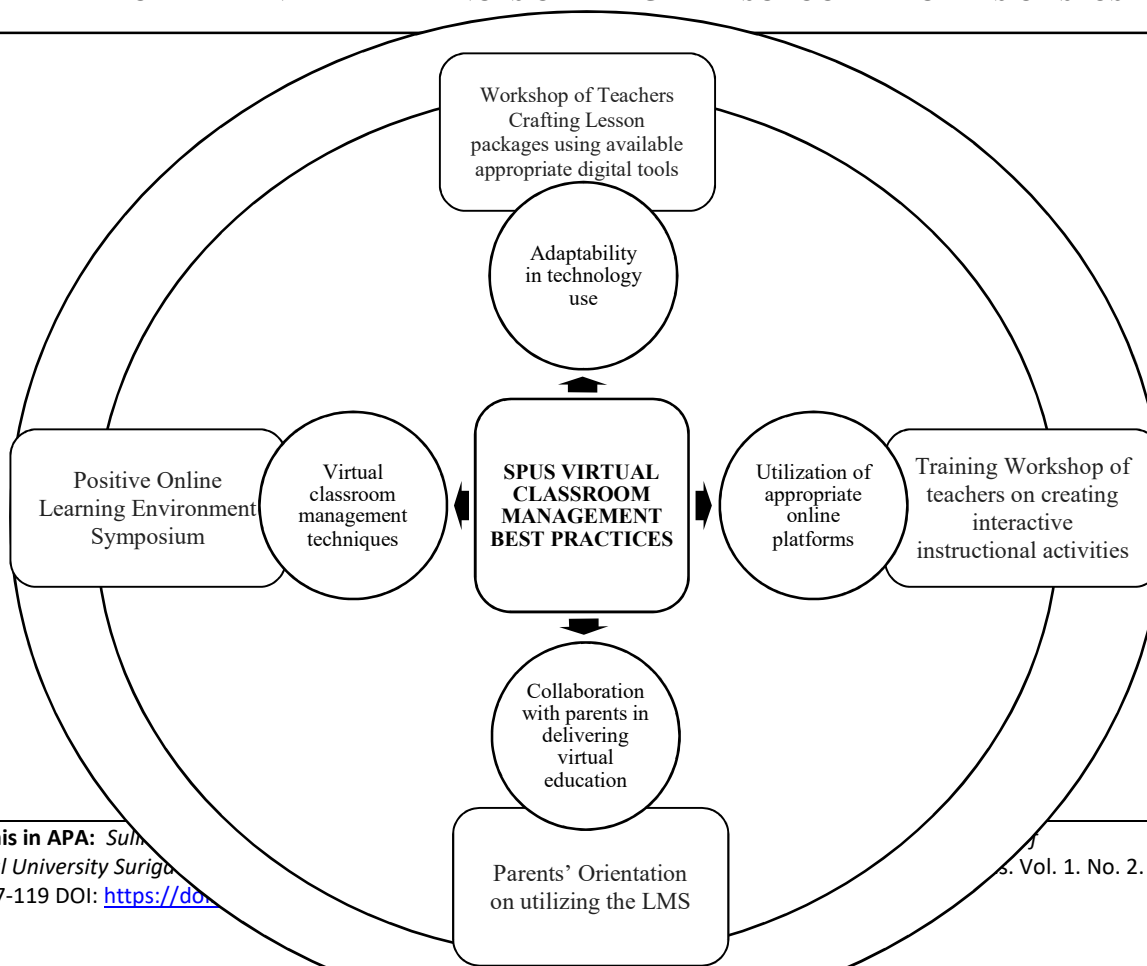
The emergent themes are drawn from the prevailing codes of the lived experiences of the grade school teachers in managing virtual classes. Based on the responses of the teacher informants who experienced managing virtual classes of grade school amidst the pandemic, the themes that emerged are the following: (a) Teachers' perception of classroom management, (b) Teachers' authority and management of virtual classes, (c) Benefits of online classes during the pandemic, (d) Challenges in conducting virtual classes, (e) Best Virtual Classroom Management



Practices. These helped the researcher achieve the main purpose of this phenomenological study which is to explore the lived experiences of grade school teachers in conducting virtual classes during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Based on the findings of the study captured from the lived experiences of the grade school teachers of SPUS, the researcher develops a Simulacrum of Virtual Classroom Management Best Practices anchored to the SPUS Vision, Mission, and Core Values. In the pursuit of quality online education in the university, Saint Paul University- Surigao (SPUS) is upholding its Catholic identity and aligns its virtual classroom management activities with its Vision. The university has best practices in virtual classroom management, adapting various modes of delivery of instruction and highly embracing the world of online education. Paulinian core values play a significant role in embracing the shift in teaching and learning delivery particularly in online learning mode. The SPUS activities are anchored on its Vision-Mission statements and Core Values as it is developmental and holistic in nature. This statement guides university educators in implementing grade school virtual classes amidst the pandemic. Consequently, SPUS showed resiliency and creativity using a flexible learning management system to deliver a more adaptive and inclusive quality education for all. In conducting online classes they exhibited their virtual classroom management best practices including the adaptability in technology use and utilization of appropriate online platforms, collaboration with parents, giving rewards and consequences, students' reflection weekly meetings, virtual classroom management techniques through implementing virtual routines, and rules or netiquettes for a peaceful and safe online learning environment. The mentioned best practices can be benchmarked by other teachers, through the simulacrum of the classroom management best practices captured from the lived experiences of the SPUS grade school teachers. Activities pertaining to these are Teachers Crafting Lesson packages using available appropriate digital tools, teachers creating interactive instructional activities utilizing appropriate online platforms, Parents' Orientation on the utilization of the LMS, and a Positive online learning environment Symposium for the learners which are rooted in the Vision-Mission Statements and Core Values of the university. Implementing these activities within the confines of resources would lead to the outcome where the university's online learning community as part of the Paulinian ReFLEX would make a difference globally.

**SIMULACRUM OF THE VIRTUAL CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT BEST PRACTICES CAPTURED FROM THE LIVED EXPERIENCES OF THE GRADE SCHOOL TEACHERS OF SPUS**



**Figure 4.** *Simulacrum of the Virtual Classroom Management Best Practices captured from the Lived Experiences of the Grade School Teachers of SPUS*

## 5. Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions were drawn: The grade school teachers' perspective on managing classes is consistently about making the classroom conducive for learning and disciplining learners' behavior. This view never changed even in the sudden switch to the conduct of virtual classes amidst the pandemic. The grade school teachers emphasized the importance of having the skills to utilize digital platforms and collaborate with parents to facilitate virtual classes efficiently during the pandemic. Virtual classes are easier to manage since they require less effort, but it is more challenging for grade school teachers due to the challenges encountered during the phenomenon. The conduct of online classes amidst the pandemic is beneficial to both teachers' and learners' learning continuity, because of their experienced advantages. Grade school teachers in a university showed resiliency and creativity in embracing the sudden changes from full face-to-face classes to implementing virtual classes as part of ReFLEX, by employing their best practices on classroom management during their virtual classes amidst the pandemic.

## 6. Recommendations

The grade school teachers must sustain their best practices in managing virtual classes that provide a safe and conducive learning environment for the learners. Teachers and parents must participate in orientations on the utilization of the learning management system or any digital platforms used in delivering education. Based on the findings of the study, to efficiently facilitate virtual classes despite the challenges encountered, best practices for managing virtual classes of the grade school teachers in a university amidst the pandemic including, the adaptability in technology use and utilization of appropriate online platforms, virtual classroom management techniques through implementing virtual routines, and rules or netiquettes, collaboration with parents, giving rewards and consequences, and students' weekly meeting must be sustained with the continued support of the grade school department in a university. Based on the result of the study that virtual classes are beneficial to both teachers and learners, the simulacrum developed by the researcher will serve as the resources to be benchmarked by other schools that conduct virtual classes.

## 7. Implications

The findings and conclusions of this study have implications for the following: Education. The output of this study could be used as a reference for teachers, parents, and learners who experienced challenges in conducting virtual classes. The proposed simulacrum of virtual classroom management practices could help them enhance their teaching and learning experiences during online distance learning. Teachers. The best practices exhibited by teachers will inspire other teachers to provide quality online instruction despite the challenges encountered in conducting virtual classes. This may equip teachers with the skills to manage virtual classes through involvement in the training workshops on the adaptability of technology use and utilizing appropriate digital platforms as the activities mentioned in the proposed model. Parents. As partners of teachers in providing distance education, parents play a crucial role in assisting grade school learners in participating in virtual classes. Teachers collaborate with parents to monitor the learners' learning progress. Therefore, parents must also be capacitated, through attending the Parents' Orientation as an activity mentioned in the proposed simulacrum, to provide appropriate assistance to the learners in conducting virtual classes. Learners. The result of this study may guide the learners in creating a safe virtual environment conducive to learning. School. The result of the study will serve as a basis for other institutions, to come up with effective programs that will help the education stakeholders to embrace the

advancement of technology in delivering distance quality education. Research. This phenomenological study may serve as evidence of the resilience of St. Paul University Surigao in continuing education amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. This can be a reference and will further contribute to future researchers who will conduct related studies about the lived experiences of elementary teachers on virtual classroom management practices.

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