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Teachers' Perspectives of What They Need from School Administration to Teach Remotely

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Abstract

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MA, Arcadia University, 2013

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Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

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Abstract

In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic caused an educational shift from traditional teaching to remote teaching. Teachers struggled to adapt to the changes because they were unable to properly prepare, yet administrators expected them to continue successfully teaching from home. Using Garrison et al.'s community of inquiry model, the purpose of this basic qualitative study was to explore the perspectives of early childhood teachers regarding teaching remotely during a pandemic and what they need from school administration to teach children remotely. Semistructured interviews were conducted with 10 early childhood teachers with experience teaching remotely during the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in the 2019-2020 school year. Interview transcripts were analyzed using thematic analysis. Results indicated that teachers were not prepared for the transition, experienced increased personal and professional stress, prioritized social emotional and cognitive experiences, and needed resources and support from their administration to teach remotely. This study contributes knowledge to the field of early childhood education and furthers understanding of teachers' experiences teaching remotely during a pandemic and what they need from administration to teach remotely. The results of this study may promote social change by providing administrators with the insight needed to make decisions that may improve the quality of teaching and learning in remote settings during a pandemic based on the recommendations and experiences of experienced teachers.

Teachers' Perspectives of What They Need from School Administration to Teach Virtually

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my husband, Joey. Your strength, patience, dedication, and support of me as I pursued this degree mean more to me than you will ever know. It still amazes me how accepting you were of me going back to school despite the unknown expenses and newborn twins we had only just had. You have never stopped me from getting what I want, no matter how ridiculous my dreams and wish lists may be. You support me unconditionally and you push me when I feel like giving up. You allow me to be myself and you stand by me when I lose sight of who I am. I cannot thank you enough for the many nights you let me work on my degree while you juggled four babies by yourself after a long day of work. I would not be where I am today if I did not have you by my side. I love you always and forever.

To my four little loves, Maximus, Sirius, Oliver, and Josephine, thank you for being patient with me as I balanced a life of motherhood and continued education. Maximus and Sirius, you were only a few months old when I began this journey and at the time, I remember thinking to myself that I must be crazy! Your bright baby smiles and unconditional love kept me going and then we welcomed Oliver and Joie to our beautiful chaos. I need you to know that everything I have done has been for the four of you and while it may have been a tumultuous 3 and a half years, we made it through to the end together. I know you are only babies and will probably never remember these years, nor will you ever read this dissertation, but I hope in some way, my accomplishments inspire you to never accept “good enough” and always, always push for more because you truly deserve it.

To my parents, thank you for raising me to value education and to reach for my goals no matter how impossible they may seem. Thank you for believing in me and making me feel like I am capable of anything I put my mind to. Sometimes, especially throughout this journey, it was your belief in me that kept me going. In fact, it was you that really pushed me to begin this journey even though I was not yet sure I could handle it. Your support and motivation, your dedication to my children and to me, and your unconditional love are what keep me going. For that, I dedicate this accomplishment to you and I truly hope I have made you proud in this way.

To my committee, especially my chair, Dr. Terri Edwards, thank you for taking this journey with me. Thank you for guiding me through each step of the way and for easing all my worries. I cannot count the number of times a quick correspondence with you eased my panicked mind instantly. You have been supportive, respectful, engaging, encouraging, and everything a student could wish for in a committee. You have taught me so much and I cannot thank you enough for this time we have spent together. I dedicate this dissertation to you because without you, I would not be where I am today.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

In 2020, the worldwide COVID-19 pandemic led to quarantining and isolating millions of people, changing their everyday lives (Beaunoyer et al., 2020). In the United States, states mandated the closure of all nonessential businesses to mitigate the spread of the virus (Bradley et al., 2020). With these closures came a new digital age where people relied on technology for socially distanced living, including doctor appointments, family gatherings, ordering groceries, and learning (Bâcă, 2020). Education was impacted as early childhood teachers were required to teach young children remotely, relying on technology and resources available to them, despite inequities in availability (Iivari et al., 2020). Early childhood teachers struggled to adapt to new methods of teaching because they had little or no warning of changes and were unable to properly prepare, yet administrators expected them to continue successfully teaching from home (Pryor et al., 2020).

To support teachers as they attempt to navigate this new educational environment, there is a need for increased understanding of what they need from their administrators to assist with teaching remotely. This will provide insight for administrators on teachers' unique perspectives. Exploring these perspectives may contribute to positive social change for students participating in remote learning by providing information regarding the needs of teachers to successfully teach their students during the pandemic. Data gained from this study may assist administrators by supporting their ability to make decisions that may improve the quality of teaching and learning in remote settings during a pandemic based on the recommendations and experiences of experienced teachers.

Chapter 1 includes a review of the background literature, problem statement, nature of the study, research questions, and purpose of the study. I identify and explain the conceptual framework for this study and important definitions from the literature are included. I also explain the assumptions, limitations, scope and delimitations, and the significance of the study.

Background

Students, teachers, and administrators faced a multitude of challenges when presented with state-mandated closures of face-to-face schools due to the COVID-19 pandemic (Bradley et al., 2020). As schools transitioned to remote learning, the people affected had to adapt. A review of research identified recurring topics involving COVID-19, the impact of COVID-19 on learning and teaching, virtual learning, and the challenges of teaching during the pandemic. Background information regarding each of these topics is introduced in this section and discussed in greater detail in Chapter 2.

The effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on school systems began in the spring of 2020, ending traditional education and leading to a new form of remote learning that was used as an emergency educational platform (Bâcă, 2020). This was to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 (Arquilla & Guzdial, 2020). Teachers were expected to transition from face-to-face teaching to teaching remotely with little to no warning, adapting their materials and collecting resources to make the transition successful (Bishop-Monroe, 2020). While virtual learning and the use of digital technologies were already in place in some schools, this abrupt transition still made an impact on the education system, as the roles of these technologies changed, in-person offices closed, and administrators shifted

to online platforms (Bâcă, 2020; Barnes et al., 2020). Some schools did not yet have the resources needed for a smooth transition to teaching remotely due to digital inequalities that created new challenges for teachers (Beaunoyer et al., 2020). In addition to the challenges of transitioning materials and technologies involved with face-to-face teaching to teaching remotely, teachers were also required to ensure that virtual strategies were supportive of students' motivation, academic achievement, and socialization (Ak & Gökdaş, 2021; Garrison et al., 1999).

Despite the plethora of current information available regarding the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on the education system, the literature contains little information regarding what it is that teachers need from administration to teach students remotely. Less is known about the perspectives of early childhood teachers and their experiences with teaching remotely during the pandemic and what they need from administrators to teach young children remotely. This study contributes to the literature related to the scope of this study. This study also supports positive social change as administrators become more familiar with the perspectives and needs of their teachers, allowing them to provide greater support and adjust protocols as necessary.

Problem Statement

Public school closures affected by the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in many districts moving towards remote learning platforms despite the lack of teacher and student preparedness (Bradley et al., 2020). As the pandemic and teaching remotely continue, there is a need for increased understanding of what teachers need from the administration to assist them as they teach remotely during this new and unique situation.

Teachers were expected to teach remotely, yet they were unable to do so because they were not yet prepared. While virtual learning and technology use in the classroom have been studied and used for many years, students and teachers experienced drastic changes that occurred during the shift to remote learning. One of the reasons for this may be due to digital inequalities found within and between districts regarding available devices and Internet coverage and access (Beaunoyer et al., 2020). Another reason students and teachers felt underprepared for the shift to remote learning may have been due to loss of personal and face-to-face interactions (Ghazali, 2020). Although there is a wealth of information on integrating technology in the classroom and the digital inequalities and cultural shifts students may face, there is a gap in research in terms of what teachers need from their administrators to assist them as they teach remotely during this new and unique situation.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to explore the perspectives of early childhood teachers regarding teaching remotely during a pandemic and what they need from school administration to successfully teach children remotely. The study provides information about what administrators can do to better support their teachers as they continue the transition to remote teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic and in the future. To fulfill this purpose, I conducted individual semistructured interviews with early childhood education teacher participants.

Research Questions

I used the following questions to guide my study:

RQ1*:* What are early childhood teachers' perspectives of using remote learning during a pandemic?

RQ2: What do early childhood teachers need from school administration to teach children remotely?

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework that grounded this study was the community of inquiry model originally designed by Garrison et al. (1999). The community of inquiry model is used to describe the experience of learning as involving a relationship between socialization, teaching, and cognitive activity (Garrison et al., 1999). This may be particularly useful for remote learning because it supports the use of collaborative social lessons in all settings, including remote settings. Understanding the community of inquiry model may help teachers who teach remotely identify the need for building online communities based on social trust and learning expectations. Therefore, the community of inquiry model is the conceptual framework used to examine early childhood teachers' perspectives regarding what support they need from administration to be able to teach young children remotely during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The logical connections between the framework presented and the nature of my study include the responsibilities of the teacher to facilitate socialization and teaching, even in remote settings, to promote students' cognitive presence and support their learning (Garrison et al., 1999). This framework is a model of how learning typically occurs, which teachers will need to recreate in remote settings during the COVID-19 pandemic for the benefit of their students. Garrison et al. (1999) expressed the need for

educators to be able to form communities of inquiry in remote settings and the unexpected shift to teaching remotely during the pandemic proved that was true. Now teachers need support from school administration to adjust to this shift and maintain their communities of inquiry in this setting. In Chapter 2, I provide greater detail on the relationships between the community of inquiry model and this research study.

The purpose of qualitative research is to construct knowledge based on the understanding of lived experiences and phenomenon (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The basic approach of qualitative research allows researchers to study how people make sense of their experiences (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). I used a basic qualitative approach for this study using semistructured interviews with early childhood teachers. Garrison et al.'s (1999) community of inquiry model provided a foundation to view the importance of maintaining social, teacher, and cognitive presences in online education. I designed the qualitative interview questions using the constructs of this theoretical framework. I did this to assist with collecting data on teachers' perspectives of their lived experiences teaching young children remotely due to a worldwide pandemic and what they need from their administrators to assist them with teaching remotely. The framework for the study was used to identify codes and themes among data given in the interviews.

Nature of the Study

The nature of this study was a basic qualitative design, including semistructured interviews used to collect data from 10 early childhood education teachers. The teachers who participated had experience teaching remotely during the COVID-19 pandemic during the 2019-2020 school year. I recruited the qualifying teachers from the Walden

University Participant Pool and educators' social media groups. I used qualitative analysis to create an understanding of early childhood teachers' perspectives of teaching young children remotely due to a worldwide pandemic and what they need from their administrators to assist them with teaching remotely. According to Rubin and Rubin (2012), interviews are a valuable method of collecting authentic and in-depth data for qualitative research. Interviews can provide rich information when follow-up questions and encouragement for expanding answers are used (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). Interviews were a useful tool for my study because they allowed me to collect data on the perspectives of early childhood teachers with experience teaching remotely during the COVID-19 pandemic. I analyzed the interview transcripts using thematic analysis to identify existing themes.

Definitions

The following terms are defined for the purpose of this study:

COVID-19: A highly contagious virus believed to have originated in Wuhan, China, originally believed to be pneumonia due to symptoms of respiratory distress, high fever, and cough. The World Health Organization determined this to be a new virus and in February of 2020, they announced its name, Coronavirus (COVID-19), and labeled its transmission as an epidemic and, soon after, a pandemic (Mbiydzenyuy & Silungwe, 2020).

Face-to-face: The traditional method of learning, where students and educators participate in daily lessons in a physical classroom setting in a brick-and-mortar school (Mashifana, 2020).

Remote learning: A method of educating students either synchronously or asynchronously from a physical distance (Pryor et al., 2020) due to an inability to participate in the typical face-to-face classroom setting (Arquilla & Guzdial, 2020).

Virtual instruction: A method of educating students using technology and online resources to maintain social interactions and continued learning. This method has been used in the wake of social distancing requirements and physical isolation (Beaunoyer et al., 2020). Assignments are submitted and graded through email or other online portals (Ghazali, 2020).

Assumptions

This study was based on several assumptions. As a basic qualitative study including semistructured interview questions, my first assumption was that my chosen interview questions would appropriately capture the experiences of early childhood teachers who have experience teaching remotely during the COVID-19 pandemic in the 2019-2020 school year. My second assumption was that each of my selected participants would be honest and forthcoming with their responses to the interview questions. I assumed this because I assured their privacy and confidentiality, hoping to impact their responses because sharing what is needed from the administration to teach remotely may have reflected poorly on the current practices of their administration. My final assumption was that I chose the best methodology to answer my research questions and solve the research problem.

Scope and Delimitations

The scope of this study was based on specific boundaries. The purpose of the study, which was to explore the perspectives of early childhood teachers on teaching remotely during a pandemic as well as their perspectives on what they need from school administration to teach children remotely, was one of the boundaries. The literature on virtual teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic supported the participant selection, as there is a gap in the literature on the needs and perspectives of early childhood teachers with experience transitioning to teaching remotely during the onset of the pandemic. While there is an abundance of information on virtual teaching, little is known about teacher's perspectives on teaching remotely during the COVID-19 pandemic, so the participant sample needed to consist of only teachers with these experiences. I chose a basic qualitative research design as the methodology to address the participating teachers' perspectives. The delimitations of this study included the selection of participants for the study based on inclusion criteria. I only explored the perspectives of teachers with experience teaching remotely due to the COVID-19 pandemic during the 2019-2020 school year. I also limited the sample population to consist of only early childhood teachers; however, I did not control for other factors such as location, years of experience, or subject matter. The use of purposeful sampling and inclusion criteria provides the potential for transferability for use by early childhood professionals.

Limitations

As with any study, some limitations needed to be considered. One of the limitations and barriers that appeared when collecting data included recruiting

participants for interviews due to the current expectation for social distancing. This limitation was addressed with the use of Zoom, a virtual tool that aids in remote, face-to-face interactions. Another limitation to consider during the participant recruitment process was that teachers may be opposed to participating in the study due to the current workload and stress of teachers as they continue to navigate teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic. A smaller sample size caused by these limitations would have limited generalizability and made reaching saturation difficult. The use of the Walden University Participant Pool, early childhood teachers' social media groups, and snowball sampling helped address these limitations. A third limitation to consider was my personal bias as a teacher who has experienced teaching remotely during the COVID-19 pandemic. Acknowledging and avoiding personal bias that could influence the study was a challenge; however, the use of a reflective journal that I recorded in as I moved through the process helped address this.

Significance

This study is significant in that it fills the gap in the literature on early childhood teachers being required to teach young children remotely due to the worldwide pandemic, COVID-19 (see Iivari et al., 2020). This study fills a gap in the literature on what teachers need from their administration to teach students remotely, which provides insight for administrators to understand the teachers' unique perspectives. Exploring these perspectives contributes to positive social change for students participating in remote learning by providing information on the needs of teachers for successfully teaching their students during the pandemic. Administrators are able to use the data

gained from this study to make decisions that can improve the quality of teaching remotely during a pandemic based on the recommendations and experiences of experienced teachers.

Summary

In Chapter 1, I introduced the topic of my qualitative study, the need for this research, and the potential for social change based on the findings. To provide background, I identified the gap in the literature related to the scope of my study. My problem statement, purpose of the study, and research questions were outlined and aligned, demonstrating the focused connections between my program of study and my research study. Garrison et al.'s (1999) community of inquiry provided a conceptual framework for the study, relating directly to the nature of the study and my choice for a basic qualitative study consisting of semistructured interviews meant to explore the perspectives of teachers with experience teaching remotely during the COVID-19 pandemic in the 2019-2020 school year. Due to the specificity of the language used throughout the study, I included a series of definitions meant to clarify any unfamiliar jargon. The inclusion of assumptions, limitations, scope, and delimitations was also meant to clarify the boundaries of the study. Finally, I identified the significance of the study and the potential this study has to further administrators' knowledge of what their teachers need to be able to teach remotely during a pandemic and how this may contribute to positive social change.

In Chapter 2, I provide a synopsis of the existing literature that contributes to my research problem. I include the search strategies I used throughout the study, the

conceptual framework I used as the foundation of the study, and an exhaustive synthesis of the studies related to my topic, framework, and problem, including literature on Garrison et al.'s (1999) community of inquiry model, COVID-19, the impact of COVID-19 on learning and teaching, virtual learning, and the value of teacher perspectives.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The problem related to this study was that there is a need for increased understanding of what teachers need from the school administration to assist them as they teach remotely during the COVID-19 pandemic. The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to explore the perspectives of early childhood teachers on teaching remotely during a pandemic and what they need from school administration to teach children remotely. I used the community of inquiry model to help understand how students' learning involves a relationship between socialization, teaching, and cognitive activity (Garrison et al., 1999).

Chapter 2 includes information on the literature search strategy used for this study, a detailed overview of the conceptual framework, and a literature review related to key concepts. The conceptual framework used for this study was Garrison et al.'s (1999) community of inquiry and the literature review relates to the key concepts of COVID-19, the impact of COVID-19 on learning and teaching, virtual learning, and teacher perspectives. The chapter concludes with a summary of the major themes in the literature as well as what is known and what is not known in the discipline related to early childhood teachers using remote learning during a pandemic and what they need from administration to teach children remotely and how the present study fills that gap in the literature.

Literature Search Strategy

I used current, scholarly, peer reviewed sources for the literature review for the perspectives of early childhood teachers using remote learning during a pandemic and

what they need from school administration to teach children remotely. These sources were accessed from the following online library databases and search engines: Walden Online Library, EBSCO, Google Scholar, general Google search, ERIC, SAGE Journals, Education Source, and Thoreau multi-database Search.

The following key terms were used to search for information on COVID-19 in the Walden Online Library database and general Google searches: *COVID-19, pandemic, COVID-19 pandemic, Coronavirus, Coronavirus pandemic,* and *social distancing*. Under the concepts of COVID-19's impact on teaching and learning and the challenges of teaching during the pandemic, the following key terms were used: *COVID-19* or *Coronavirus* and *education, COVID-19* or *Coronavirus* and *teaching, COVID-19* or *Coronavirus* and *learning, pandemic* and *teaching,* and *remote teaching*. Under the concept of virtual learning, I used the following key terms: *virtual learning, virtual teaching, online learning, online teaching, early childhood education and online or virtual, remote learning, remote teaching, hybrid learning, hybrid teaching, blended learning, blended teaching, community of inquiry, technology inequity and school, technology disadvantage and school,* and *technology in school or classroom*. Most of the articles chosen from the databases for this literature review were found through searches conducted through Google Scholar, ERIC, SAGE Journals, Education Source, and Thoreau multi-database with limitations that ensured all sources were peer-reviewed and published within the last 5 years.

Conceptual Framework

The phenomenon that was explored in this study was the implementation of remote learning, as many teachers experienced transitioning to remote learning during the 2019-2020 school year due to the COVID-19 pandemic (see Bradley et al., 2020). The conceptual framework that I used for this study was Garrison et al.'s (1999) community of inquiry. I used the community of inquiry framework to explore the online learning community through the elements of social presence, cognitive presence, and teaching presence (Garrison et al., 1999). The community of inquiry model facilitates a meaningful educational experience that is not restricted by the need for physical attendance (Cleveland-Innes et al., 2019); therefore, it can be extended to explore the development of remote learning as it occurs in an online setting (Garrison et al., 1999; Huang et al., 2019; Popescu & Badea, 2020).

Garrison et al. (1999) argued that a true learning community cannot be achieved without all three working components, social presence, cognitive presence, and teaching presence, which were derived from John Dewey's concept of education and the scientific process of inquiry (Almasi & Zhu, 2020; Garrison, 2017a; Sidiropoulou & Mavroidis, 2019). The process in which the community of inquiry model can best support education aligns with Dewey's (1938) theory of inquiry, which states that cognitive development occurs in four stages: a triggering event, exploration, integration, and resolution. Dewey also argued that students and teachers should work together as they progress through these stages, participating in active discussions, collaboration, and higher-level learning (Beckett, 2019). Garrison et al.'s (1999) community of inquiry model aligns with

Dewey's notion that education is a community effort and teachers and learners are meant to work together towards a shared educational goal (Beckett, 2019; Sidiropoulou & Mavroidis, 2019). Researchers continue to rely on the community of inquiry model as a framework for understanding the roles of social, cognitive, and teaching presences in online educational settings (Huang et al., 2019).

With the community of inquiry model, social presence can be described as the mediator between the cognitive and teaching presences; establishing the role of social interaction in education and predicting academic achievement, failures, and satisfaction (Dempsey & Zhang, 2019; Kara et al., 2019; Nasir, 2020; Swan et al., 2020). Social presence consists of collaborating, improving communication and connections, and developing relationships in the community of learners (Cleveland-Innes et al., 2019; Dempsey & Zhang, 2019; Popescu & Badea, 2020). Social presence may be established by teachers changing the focus of their lessons from the individual student to the shared educational purpose (Garrison, 2016), resulting in increased confidence to participate, increased opportunities to ask questions and share ideas, and decreased feelings of isolation and insecurity associated with typical distance learning (Cleveland-Innes et al., 2019; Dempsey & Zhang, 2019; Sidiropoulou & Mavroidis, 2019). Social presence also supports opportunities for continued education despite constraints of distance or time in a safe environment of students and teachers who are invested in working together towards the same goals (Cleveland-Innes et al., 2019; Dempsey & Zhang, 2019). Peer participation is critical; however, it is possible, especially in a virtual, asynchronous environment, to achieve a positive social presence through text, recorded videos, notes,

and self-regulated social media collaborations (Garrison et al., 1999; Nasir, 2020; Popescu & Badea, 2020). While the goal of academics is typically cognitive in nature, social presence supports that goal through critical thinking practices, shared perspectives, and authentic connections with other learners in the community (Garrison, 2017b; Garrison et al., 1999; Huang et al., 2019; Popescu & Badea, 2020; Swan et al., 2020) and is perceived as essential for virtual learning (Nasir, 2020).

Cognitive presence can be described as the process of achieving metacognition or a deeper understanding of the student's personal thought process as well as the thought processes of those in their community of learners (Dempsey & Zhang, 2019). Cognitive presence exists in four phases: the triggering event, exploration, integration, and resolution (Garrison, 2017b). In the exploration phase, the learners collect information from a triggering event that they cannot yet make sense of and test possible solutions to the problem (Almasi & Zhu, 2020; Dempsey & Zhang, 2019; Huang et al., 2019). In the integration phase, learners begin to connect ideas, practicing critical reflection and constructing meaning (Almasi & Zhu, 2020; Dempsey & Zhang, 2019; Huang et al., 2019). While the students rarely reach the final phase, the resolution phase, they are still engaging in higher level learning and problem solving directed towards reaching an outcome (Cleveland-Innes et al., 2019; Dempsey & Zhang, 2019). The resolution phase consists of applying the ideas created in the integration phase and testing for efficacy (Almasi & Zhu, 2020; Dempsey & Zhang, 2019; Huang et al., 2019). Students need opportunities to engage in higher level cognitive presence as part of the learning process, as this is a predictor of student performance (Almasi & Zhu, 2020). Students also need to

be aware of the learning processes they are participating in so they may take responsibility for the practices of reflecting as well as explaining and justifying their thought processes throughout the cognitive phases (Sidiropoulou & Mavroidis, 2019; Vaughan & Wah, 2020). Cognitive presence and metacognition are achieved through individual and social responsibilities (Vaughan & Wah, 2020) which are primarily influenced by the teaching presence (Almasi & Zhu, 2020).

Teaching presence directly impacts the successes or failures of the cognitive and social presences because it is the teaching that influences the cognitive presence by facilitating social presence (Dempsey & Zhang, 2019; Huang et al., 2019; Nasir, 2020). For teaching presence to successfully impact cognitive development and learning online, it is critical that the teacher distributes their authority and responsibilities so that the students and teacher coexist within the learning community and share the responsibilities that a teacher would typically take on independently in a face-to-face setting (Dempsey & Zhang, 2019; Sidiropoulou & Mavroidis, 2019; Swan et al., 2020; Zhu et al., 2019). It is believed that the principles of the teaching presence are more important than the actual teacher in terms of student success, satisfaction, and sense of community (Dempsey & Zhang, 2019; Huang et al., 2019). These principles include the design of the course's discussions, methods of communication and discourse, the facilitation of establishing community and higher levels of inquiry through discussion and the completion of assigned tasks, and direct instruction including instruction on respect, responsibility, and inquiry-based resolution (Almasi & Zhu, 2020; Beckett, 2019; Dempsey & Zhang, 2019). These principles promote the social and cognitive presences through community and

higher-level thinking and learning when the students and teacher participate in shared learning goals, discussions, activities, problem solving, and decision making (Beckett, 2019). The students may rely on the teacher to design the lesson (Sidiropoulou & Mavroidis, 2019); however, the teacher should be scaffolding the lessons to allow student engagement and participation in leadership roles to support metacognition and to build and justify shared knowledge and beliefs within the learning community (Dempsey & Zhang, 2019).

The community of inquiry framework was originally designed to assess the implementation of computer conferences; however, it has since been used to evaluate modern forms of virtual education, including blended learning and online classes (Huang et al., 2019; Popescu & Badea, 2020). Recent studies have sought to understand the relationship between and satisfaction with the three interdependent presences of the community of inquiry model (Huang et al., 2019; Nasir, 2020) leading to the conclusion that teaching presence directly effects cognitive presence through the facilitation of social presence (Dempsey & Zhang, 2019; Huang et al., 2019). The community of inquiry survey was designed to measure student perceptions of the existing presences and has been used in research since 2008, including a study comparing the community of inquiry framework to Carl Roger's Person-Centered Education model (Swan et al., 2020). Recent studies have also discussed the potential of adding a fourth presence, the learning presence, to address the different learning styles of students and how they impact the online learning experience (Huang et al., 2019; Popescu & Badea, 2020; Sidiropoulou & Mavroidis, 2019). The current literature has clearly established the credibility of the

community of inquiry framework (Huang et al., 2019) and the necessity for all three presences to coexist (Sidiropoulou & Mavroidis, 2019).

I used the community of inquiry framework for my study because this set the tone for how online learning typically occurs (see Garrison et al., 1999) and what teachers need to be able to do to promote successful cognitive and social presences for their students (see Dempsey & Zhang, 2019). Recent research on the community of inquiry model has demonstrated a need for redesigning modern online lessons to fit the framework and include the cognitive, social, and teaching presences (Vaughan & Wah, 2020). Teachers will need to recreate lessons inclusive of engaging collaborative learning based on the community of inquiry model in remote settings during the COVID-19 pandemic for the benefit and satisfaction of their students (Almasi & Zhu, 2020; Garrison et al., 1999). The community of inquiry framework can be used to support the teachers' implementation of remote learning as it occurs in a virtual setting (Cleveland-Innes et al., 2019).

Literature Related to COVID-19

Early in the Spring of 2019, the world was introduced to a new virus soon to be known as COVID-19 (Bâcă, 2020). The sudden onset of the virus encouraged researchers to pursue the topic; providing a plethora of current, peer reviewed articles to be reviewed and used as background for this study. A review of the literature on COVID-19 presented information on where COVID-19 originated, how it spread throughout the world, what it is, and how it impacted the lives of billions of people in a short amount of time.

COVID-19 is a contagious virus that effects the respiratory system and can be contracted through the airborne transmission of respiratory droplets and the touching of contaminated surfaces, resulting in the possibility of allergy, cold, or flu-like symptoms, fever, cough, muscle pain, shortness of breath, and loss of taste or smell (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC], 2020; Dewi, 2020; Pratama et al., 2020; Santos et al., 2021). The virus has an incubation period estimated to be between two and 14 days, with symptoms lasting up to 14 days (Dewi, 2020; Pratama et al., 2020; Santos et al., 2021). It is also possible for those infected with the COVID-19 virus to remain symptomless, however, they are still considered contagious (CDC, 2020). Adults, particularly adults with underlying conditions, are more likely to contract the virus than children and are more likely to be hospitalized than children due to the virus (CDC, 2020). Approximately one third of children who were hospitalized due to COVID-19 moved to the Intensive Care Unit, with a majority of those being of school age (CDC, 2020). While the virus has the potential to be fatal for children, it is more commonly fatal for adults (CDC, 2020).

In December of 2019, as China celebrated the Chinese Lunar New Year, the city of Wuhan, China experienced an increase in peculiar pneumonia cases, referred to as Wuhan Pneumonia (Sun et al., 2020) which were later diagnosed as the first cases of COVID-19 (Mbiydzenyuy & Silungwe, 2020; Pratama et al., 2020; Santos et al., 2021; Sun et al., 2020).Wuhan, China, is a major travel hub with both a high-traffic airport and railroad, especially during peak holiday seasons such as the Chinese Lunar New Year, which aided in the quick transmission of COVID-19 across China and soon after, the rest

of the world (Mbiydzenyuy & Silungwe, 2020; Sun et al., 2020). By early 2020, the transmission of the disease had reached pandemic status (Santos et al., 2021) with the first case reaching the United States in mid-January (Barnes et al., 2020). For the first thirty days, Washington state and the University of Washington were the epicenters of positive COVID-19 cases in the United States and then by March of 2020, schools across the United States opted to close or transition to virtual learning due to the increase of spreading cases (Barnes et al., 2020; Romero-Ivanova et al., 2020).

COVID-19 is believed to have originated in a species of bats from Zhoushan, Zhejiang that potentially migrated to Wuhan because they were attracted to the red and green lights lining the bridges on the Yangtze River along the way, as well as the plethora of insects surrounding the food markets open in Wuhan for the holiday (Sun et al., 2020). During the migration, the virus survived in the bats and seemingly mutated, allowing it to effect humans who were particularly vulnerable due to the winter weather (Sun et al., 2020). After the initial title, Wuhan Pneumonia, the World Health Organization named the disease 2019 n COV, and then changed it to Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronaviruse-2 (SARS-COV-2), and finally, by February 2020, the disease became known as it is today, as either Coronavirus 2019 or COVID-19 (Sun et al., 2020).

COVID-19 is not the first pandemic experienced in recent decades and is not expected to be the last (Ghazali, 2020). Preventative measures have been put in place to ensure safety and sanitation meant to prevent the transmission of the virus. Research shows that it is critical that people consistently wash and sanitize their hands, disinfect surfaces, properly wear face masks, refrain from touching their face, and practice social

distancing of six feet or more (CDC, 2020; Mbiydzenyuy & Silungwe, 2020). It is also suggested that people stay home if they are feeling sick and use ventilators when possible (CDC, 2020). These measures are meant to mitigate the spread of the virus and alleviate some of the negative impacts caused by the pandemic.

With the rapid onset of the COVID-19 pandemic came an abundance of social, economic, and educational changes and challenges in addition to the new safety and sanitation measures being enforced. Nations around the world demonstrated social, educational, and economical vulnerability as they had during pandemics in the past (Arquilla & Guzdial, 2020; Ghazali, 2020). Modern technology, advanced medicine, and global health research alleviated some of that vulnerability this time (Arquilla & Guzdial, 2020).

In the Spring of 2020, more than three billion people made the rapid transition into isolation to prevent the continued spread of the COVID-19 virus (Beaunoyer et al., 2020). Businesses and schools closed with little or no warning and people across the world suffered both socially and economically. Businesses had to choose between staying open and risking lives or closing and losing their income (Seke, 2020). For many, the only method of continuing business, social interactions, and education was to shift to virtual platforms, relying heavily on technology (Bishop-Monroe, 2020; Bradley et al., 2020; Mahyoob, 2020; Summers, 2020).

While the unemployment rate increased at the start of the pandemic, many jobs were saved by technology because it provided opportunities for people to meet and work from home (Arquilla & Guzdial, 2020; Barnes et al., 2020; Pratama et al., 2020). Online

shopping also increased due to the peoples' need to shelter in place, opening positions for essential retail workers (Arquilla & Guzdial, 2020; Beaunoyer et al., 2020). Nearly 570 million students throughout the world (Pratama et al., 2020) were protected as schools closed and teachers and students transitioned to online learning, using social networking and technology to maintain education for the remainder of the school year (Arquilla & Guzdial, 2020). Families and friends also used social networking while in isolation to maintain social interactions (Beaunoyer et al., 2020). While technology was used to maintain some normalcy through these trying times, it also exacerbated the need for cyber security, the existing digital inequalities within communities, and the inconsistencies of trust in the information relayed by the media (Arquilla & Guzdial, 2020; Beaunoyer et al., 2020).

The COVID-19 pandemic impacted people's mental health as well (Arquilla & Guzdial, 2020; Beaunoyer et al., 2020). During the onset, there was large scale panic as people adjusted to their new lives; managing the loss or transition of jobs, childcare, schools, and socialization (Beaunoyer et al., 2020). Social gatherings were banned in many places, limiting contact between people (Ghazali, 2020; Mbiydzenyuy & Silungwe, 2020). Families were no longer allowed to visit loved ones, including those in long term care facilities because they were more vulnerable due to the likelihood of the patrons being over 60 with underlying illnesses and the close proximity of those who lived there (Beaunoyer et al., 2020; CDC, 2020). For those who suffered losses, they could not spend the last moments with their dying friend or family member, nor attend their funerals (Beaunoyer et al., 2020). Domestic violence rates increased as people remained in

isolation with those they lived with (Beaunoyer et al., 2020). These situations impacted the psychological wellbeing of people around the world (Arquilla & Guzdial, 2020).

People were expected to stay in their homes unless absolutely necessary and in many areas, were also expected to quarantine before and after leaving their homes (Mbiydzenyuy & Silungwe, 2020). The World Health Organization monitored the situation and communicated with the public through the media (Beaunoyer et al., 2020) and the CDC coordinated interventions, testing, and contact tracing (Owolabi, 2020). Anyone with a confirmed positive COVID-19 test or who was suspected of being in contact with someone who tested positive had to quarantine and clean the infected areas (Sun et al., 2020). As time passed and the number of cases fluctuated, restrictions and protocols were adjusted accordingly and by December of 2020, vaccines were introduced in the United States and were distributed by each state in phases which the CDC suggested should start with essential workers and people over the age of 75 (CDC, 2021a). While the pandemic is being controlled, there is still more to learn about the impacts of COVID-19, particularly those that will have lasting effects on systems such as education, and so more research is needed.

Literature Related to the Impact of COVID-19 on Education

In an effort to mitigate the COVID-19 virus, schools across the world were forced to close their doors and transition to an emergency mode of education in the forms of virtual and hybrid learning platforms (Bâcă, 2020; Ghounane, 2020; Martinez & Broemmel, 2021). This had a major impact on the education system and the many stakeholders of education including parents, staff, administration, and students (Iivari et

al., 2020). This section explores the literature related to the shift from face-to-face to virtual education, the impact on low-income families, the digital inequalities and social and emotional challenges exacerbated by this shift, and the planning that was necessary as schools began considering reopening their doors.

The shift from face-to-face education to virtual education brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic was based on impeding the spread of the virus and limiting potential health risks for staff and students (CDC, 2020). State and local governments, as well as school stakeholders had to make the difficult decisions about how to continue education; weighing the risks and benefits of face-to-face, virtual, and hybrid options (Barnes et al., 2020; Buschelman, 2020; CDC, 2020). School closures due to the pandemic effected schools all over the world; impacting the educations of nearly 1.5 billion students (Mahyoob, 2020; Mbiydzenyuy & Silungwe, 2020). By mid-May of 2020, 46 states in the United States had closed public schools for the remainder of the year based on factors such as location, finances, and community needs (Barnes et al., 2020; Buschelman, 2020; Kaden, 2020).

During the closures, teachers were responsible for transitioning instruction from traditional to digital with little to no training, while adhering to state standards and curriculums and continuing to differentiate for the students (Ghazali, 2020; Mbiydzenyuy & Silungwe, 2020; McGlynn & Kelly, 2020; Owolabi, 2020). Teachers quickly learned that you cannot successfully transfer face-to-face lessons to virtual lessons without modifications and varied resources (Summers, 2020). Digital technologies and social media platforms such as Zoom, Google Classroom, Google Meet, and breakout rooms

allowed teachers to present lessons in meaningful, interactive ways and promoted open communication with the students (Bâcă, 2020; Ghounane, 2020; Pratama et al., 2020; Rohman et al., 2020; Romero-Ivanova et al., 2020). Creating these new lessons and learning how best to deliver the material forced administrators and teachers to adapt to increased workloads and modified schedules (Kaden, 2020).

With the shift came many challenges. Parents also had to adjust to new routines and increased workloads as some struggled with working from home, providing childcare, and supporting their children's schoolwork (Buschelman, 2020). Teachers struggled with reaching students who did not show up to virtual classes and had to be cautious when calling parents because they no longer had access to a private school phone (Kaden, 2020; Martinez & Broemmel, 2021). The students who needed the most help, were typically the most likely to miss virtual classes and the most difficult to reach (Owolabi, 2020). Students who did participate in the virtual classes were difficult to engage and accurately assess (Kaden, 2020; Mbiydzenyuy & Silungwe, 2020; Owolabi, 2020).

Despite the challenges, the shift to virtual education during COVID-19 provided opportunities for deeper, more meaningful learning as the teachers and students explored more freedom in their transformed lessons (Kaden, 2020). The loss of bell schedules, standardized testing, and time restraints allowed teachers to create lessons on more interesting and current topics (Arquilla & Guzdial, 2020; Kaden, 2020; Mahyoob, 2020). There was also an increase in available time and options for virtual field trips and guest speakers via online platforms (Won et al., 2020). These resources helped with planning;

however, some subjects did not transfer to virtual platforms well, particularly those in need of hands-on experience (Bâcă, 2020; Kaden, 2020; Romero-Ivanova et al., 2020).

Schools and teachers were no longer the only method of education as students became more familiar with locating digital information independently (Ghazali, 2020). Teachers had the options to provide materials online, through the mail, and live and the options to present the lessons synchronously or asynchronously (Ghounane, 2020; Pryor et al., 2020). Students could work independently at any time and in any location (Bâcă, 2020; Pratama et al., 2020). They only needed access to the materials and resources and then they could check in with their teachers virtually during class or office hours (Bishop-Monroe, 2020; Ghazali, 2020; Ghounane, 2020; Kaden, 2020; Pryor et al., 2020). This supported the students' autonomy and the potential for multi-tasking, but impeded the teachers control over the students (Bâcă, 2020; Ghazali, 2020; Ghounane, 2020; Mbiydzenyuy & Silungwe, 2020). Nevertheless, teachers were still necessary for planning and distributing materials to continue the education of our students and remained irreplaceable throughout the pandemic (McGlynn & Kelly, 2020; Toquero & Talidong, 2020).

As teachers and students adjusted to these changes, challenges, and opportunities, the need for training and clear expectations from administrators became evident (Pryor et al., 2020). Teachers needed to quickly learn how to teach virtually, how to utilize the new resources being introduced, and how to support and motivate their students and families (Bradley et al., 2020; Buschelman, 2020; Collins et al., 2020; Ghazali, 2020; Ghounane, 2020; Kaden, 2020; Pratama et al., 2020; Pryor et al., 2020; Summers, 2020). They

needed to remain flexible and willing to learn new methods, while keeping the information they passed on to the students simple and consistent (Romero-Ivanova et al., 2020; Summers, 2020). Students needed to relearn how to learn as the technology and pedagogy changes impacted the ease of access and their overall motivation (Bradley et al., 2020; Helding, 2020; Owolabi, 2020; Pratama et al., 2020; Toquero & Talidong, 2020). For teachers and students alike, the transition to virtual education required more energy and motivation than the traditional face-to-face lessons, as well as a new understanding of the shifts in time management and routines (Bradley et al., 2020; Pryor et al., 2020). Asking students for feedback and taking time to reflect with students after virtual lessons promoted engagement and an understanding of the students' needs (Bishop-Monroe, 2020; Bradley et al., 2020). It also provided students with a better understanding of the challenges that teachers were facing and what they needed (Bâcă, 2020). While many of the students and teachers were able to work together and excel in the face of these changes, some found them too difficult to manage and either failed, refused to try, or quit entirely (Barnes et al., 2020; Helding, 2020; Martinez & Broemmel, 2021). This was especially true for older, veteran teachers who did not have any experience with teaching virtually and who felt as if the new methods were unaligned with their original passions for teaching (Buschelman, 2020; Ghounane, 2020; Martinez & Broemmel, 2021; Summers, 2020).

Transitioning to virtual education at the start of the pandemic was the only option to continue education, but for many, this transition exacerbated preexisting digital inequalities (Beaunoyer et al., 2020; Kaden, 2020). These inequalities proved to be a

major challenge during these already challenging times (Bâcă, 2020; Pryor et al., 2020). Staff and students across the globe had inconsistent access to digital devices, networks, and the skills to use them (Beaunoyer et al., 2020; Bishop-Monroe, 2020; Buschelman, 2020; Helding, 2020; Iivari et al., 2020; Martinez & Broemmel, 2021; Soto-Córdova, 2020).

Schools that were already considered "one-to-one," where every student and faculty member was provided with a device were most prepared for the transition (Kaden, 2020). There were also some schools that were able to provide devices to the students and faculty in need (Ghazali, 2020; Iivari et al., 2020), however, many districts were not. For families that already had their own devices, the quality of the device also impacted the accessibility of education because not all programs and platforms run on every device (Bishop-Monroe, 2020; Mahyoob, 2020; Rohman et al., 2020). Even if the students and teachers had access to devices, they may not have had access to reliable networks which impacted accessibility, dependability, and lag time (Bâcă, 2020; Helding, 2020; Mahyoob, 2020; Rohman et al., 2020; Romero-Ivanova et al., 2020; Won et al., 2020). Some districts were able to offer internet through hot spots and connections with internet service providers (Ghazali, 2020; Kaden, 2020; Mbiydzenyuy & Silungwe, 2020), but again, this was not possible for all districts. In addition to using the internet for education during the pandemic, the internet became necessary for a variety of other everyday tasks as well, which posed another challenge; the more people trying to use the internet within a household, the slower and less reliable it became (Beaunoyer et al., 2020; Romero-Ivanova et al., 2020).

In addition to the challenges families faced with providing appropriate devices and networks, some families struggled with providing appropriate environments for using the technology as well (Buschelman, 2020). Students struggled with distractions at home including noisy and toxic environments (Bâcă, 2020; Helding, 2020; Won et al., 2020). Low-income families were more likely to struggle with this than more privileged families (Ghazali, 2020; Kaden, 2020; Martinez & Broemmel, 2021). Some students with parents who lost their jobs due to COVID had to leave their homes causing them to struggle with connecting to the internet for classes (Iivari et al., 2020). Homelessness was also an issue during the shift to virtual education during the pandemic (CDC, 2020). Approximately five percent of students in public schools in the United States do not have stable homes and nearly 10 percent of public-school students in New York City are homeless (Kaden, 2020). Students need access to a welcoming learning environment to have an equal opportunity to learn (Summers, 2020). One option for promoting an equal opportunity for all students to learn is to provide materials in a variety of formats so that the education is accessible to all students (Kaden, 2020; Martinez & Broemmel, 2021).

Despite the technologically advanced nature of the world, many people, especially low-income and already socially disadvantaged people, lacked the skills needed to successfully learn, teach, and socialize with digital technology (Beaunoyer et al., 2020; Iivari et al., 2020; Mbiydzenyuy & Silungwe, 2020). Students and teachers needed to be trained on digital literacy and how to handle internet and technology issues (Beaunoyer et al., 2020; Ghazali, 2020; Won et al., 2020). Parents, especially parents of elementary level students needed to understand digital literacy as well because their children were

relying on them for support (Pryor et al., 2020; Seke, 2020). This was not only a matter of closing the gap on a lack of digital accessibility and literacy created in education, employment opportunities, and social class, but also a matter of safety during the pandemic (Beaunoyer et al., 2020). When families needed to leave their homes to access devices, networks, and stable environments, they increased their chance of exposure to the virus (Beaunoyer et al., 2020).

The transition to virtual education was also difficult for low-income families and families suffering from unemployment due to the lack of available food as well (Romero-Ivanova et al., 2020). In the United States, nearly 30 million children are enrolled in the National School Lunch program and nearly 15 million are enrolled in the National School Breakfast program (CDC, 2020). When schools first closed, families panicked because they would no longer have access to those free, reliable meals, but districts were able to provide meals to the families in the community throughout the closures (Kaden, 2020; Martinez & Broemmel, 2021).

With the pandemic came a wave of challenges, changes, and learning curves that increased teachers,' students,' and their families' anxiety, depression, and stress (Collins et al., 2020; Mbiydzenyuy & Silungwe, 2020; Romero-Ivanova et al., 2020). In addition to the challenges of digital inequalities and financial struggles exacerbated by the pandemic, many struggled with social-emotional difficulties as well (Helding, 2020). The lack of face-to-face socialization and forced isolation caused loneliness and a lack of motivation for students and teachers (Bâcă, 2020; Collins et al., 2020; Ghazali, 2020; Helding, 2020; Kaden, 2020; Martinez & Broemmel, 2021; Soto-Córdova, 2020). During

the transition to virtual education, teachers attempted to help students cope with the changes and better manage the balance between home and school life (Bâcă, 2020; Romero-Ivanova et al., 2020). Teachers practiced compassion, flexibility, support, and understanding to facilitate the development of essential social-emotional skills in their students (Collins et al., 2020; Helding, 2020; Summers, 2020). As students struggled to maintain focus and motivation as they transitioned from social learning to independent learning, teachers attempted to create lessons that were more engaging, relevant, interactive, and provided students with choices (Bâcă, 2020; Collins et al., 2020; Ghounane, 2020; Soto-Córdova, 2020). Still, students struggled with the lack of structure, the long hours sitting in front of a computer, and the accessibility to online gaming during class time (Bâcă, 2020; Beaunoyer et al., 2020; Bishop-Monroe, 2020). The use of group work, Zoom meetings, and virtual reality classrooms helped to foster socialization and a sense of normalcy during class, but that only helped if the students were willing to keep their cameras and microphones turned on and participate (Arquilla & Guzdial, 2020; Collins et al., 2020; Romero-Ivanova et al., 2020; Won et al., 2020). As the students struggled to feel heard, connected, empowered, resilient, and optimistic, the teachers struggled to recognize these emotions through the computer screens (Romero-Ivanova et al., 2020; Summers, 2020; Won et al., 2020). Once schools started opening, the students' emotions were hidden behind masks (Romero-Ivanova et al., 2020). With so much focus on the social-emotional health, well-being, and success of the students, attention to the mental health and motivation of the teachers unfortunately lacked priority (Kaden, 2020; Martinez & Broemmel, 2021).

The transition to emergency virtual education came with little to no warning (Martinez & Broemmel, 2021). In preparation of the potential for schools to reopen and sports and extra-curriculars to begin, the CDC released a series of suggestions and a call for schools to collaborate in the creation of an emergency operation plan that addresses new protocols, the promotion of healthy, preventative behaviors, and any special needs of the students, families, and staff (CDC, 2020, 2021b). The operation plan would require schools remain informed about local COVID-19 data and develop a method of sharing information with the community that is easy to understand and access (CDC, 2020; Collins et al., 2020).

In an effort to maintain social distancing, staggered scheduling and hybrid learning, where cohorts of students alternate between face-to-face and virtual learning were viable options (CDC, 2020). These options would prevent large groups of students in the building at the same time, allowing increased space for maintaining six feet between middle and high school students (CDC, 2020) and three feet between elementary students who are typically considered a lower transmission community (CDC, 2021b). Social distancing in the cafeteria is needed and could be supported with the use of disposable materials, prepackaged meals, and enhanced cleaning between groups (CDC, 2020). These methods would also minimize issues with contact tracing and widespread transmissions of the virus (CDC, 2021b). In the event that someone tests positive, effected spaces should be closed and disinfected and anyone present should be informed (CDC, 2020).

Posting signs in the hallways, marking the floors, and utilizing sneeze guards can support students' efforts to stay separate and participate in healthy behaviors (CDC, 2020). High traffic areas and shared equipment should be avoided and excess furniture should be removed (CDC, 2020, 2021b) Essential, high touch items such as handrails, sanitizer dispensers, and doorknobs should be disinfected routinely (CDC, 2020). Staff and students should consistently and properly wash hands and wear masks at all times, including on the bus, even though this may be difficult for young children, special education students, and students with disabilities (CDC, 2020). Staff that interacts with young children and English Language Learners may wear clear masks to support lip reading, however, the sole use of clear face shields are an unacceptable form of preventing transmission (CDC, 2020, 2021b). If a student cannot comply or if a student is considered high-risk, the option for virtual education should be available as well as continued access to special education services (CDC, 2020, 2021b).

Adults in the school had a much higher transmission rate than students (CDC, 2021b) and while they needed to be easily accessible to students (Owolabi, 2020), it was essential that they practiced self-care, staying home when ill and participating in virtual professional development when possible (CDC, 2020). Teachers and staff should have been vaccinated and all non-essential visitors should have refrained from entering the building (CDC, 2021b). Families should have been responsible for determining if their children were well enough to attend school and should have kept them home if they were not (CDC, 2020). Schools also needed a plan for addressing students and faculty that became ill during the school day or who were in close contact with others who became ill

to ensure that students had access to all materials and resources and teachers had adequate coverage if they needed to go home or quarantine (CDC, 2020; Owolabi, 2020).

This pandemic has proven how essential schools and teachers are. In the event of another situation such as the closures due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the CDC (2021b) has asserted that schools should be one of the last entities to close and one of the first to reopen. Students have expressed their preference for traditional face-to-face learning over the challenging and new virtual learning; however, the education system has been in need of an upgrade since before the pandemic forced these changes (Bishop-Monroe, 2020; Ghounane, 2020; Mahyoob, 2020; Rohman et al., 2020). The advancements made in technology and teaching pedagogy have created opportunities for advancing future education that will impact the future of economics, politics, and sociology as well (Mbiydzenyuy & Silungwe, 2020; Pratama et al., 2020). COVID-19 has forced stakeholders to reevaluate the education system, and some of the changes made during the pandemic may remain as teachers attempt to close the gaps in learning lost in the beginning of the pandemic through the future, therefore more research is needed related to COVID-19's continued impact on education (Buschelman, 2020; Pratama et al., 2020; Seke, 2020).

Literature Related to Virtual Learning

Before the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic and the shift to remote learning, virtual learning had become a popular educational forum used to replace or enhance traditional face-to-face education (Huang et al., 2019; Suleiman & Danmuchikwali, 2020). Dating back to the 1970s, virtual classes were being held via phone conference,

and by the 1990s virtual courses were being offered by universities via online audio, video, and text (Beckett, 2019; Suleiman & Danmuchikwali, 2020). The demand for virtual education is increasing around the world for all ages, and the options for providing this form of education are also increasing (Bishop-Monroe, 2020; Cleveland-Innes et al., 2019; Huang et al., 2020; Mashifana, 2020; Nasir, 2020). Children are being exposed to technology from infancy and are spending increasing amounts of time interacting with technology throughout aspects of their lives, including gaming, research, and socialization (Cleveland-Innes et al., 2019; Delacruz, 2019; Ghounane, 2020; Iivari et al., 2020; Mahyoob, 2020; Slutsky et al., 2021). With the increase in technological exposure, resources, and digital literacy comes the necessity for virtual education options and modern teaching pedagogy to support this transformation in education (Ghazali, 2020; Lauricella et al., 2020; Slutsky et al., 2021; Suleiman & Danmuchikwali, 2020). Virtual education and technology integration are necessities because they are aligned with preparing the young generations for a technology-rich future (Bâcă, 2020; Delacruz, 2019; Ghounane, 2020; Iivari et al., 2020; Slutsky et al., 2021; Summers, 2020). Virtual learning has become a new normal in education that provides a unique set of opportunities, benefits, and challenges compared to traditional face-to-face learning (Cleveland-Innes et al., 2019; Huang et al., 2019).

The increase in virtual learning opportunities sparked the increase in available, user-friendly, virtual learning platforms, programs, and methodologies used to deliver expectations, lessons, assignments, and feedback (Delacruz, 2019; McGlynn & Kelly, 2020). Zoom, Google Classroom, Blackboard, Microsoft Teams, Moodle, and social

media were some of the most popular platforms being used online to simulate synchronous, face-to-face classes and asynchronous learning (Collins et al., 2020; Ghounane, 2020; Mahyoob, 2020; Mbiydzenyuy & Silungwe, 2020; McGlynn & Kelly, 2020; Szente, 2020). Within the chosen platform, teachers can engage students using online discussion boards, emails, office hours, polls, games, simulations, quizzes, screen sharing, group work, breakout rooms, and more (Beckett, 2019; Bishop-Monroe, 2020; Collins et al., 2020; Ghazali, 2020; Huang et al., 2020; McGlynn & Kelly, 2020; Nasir, 2020; Summers, 2020; Szente, 2020). Teachers and students can interact, engage, and present using programs such as YouTube, Edpuzzle, Screencastify, and Flipgrid and materials such as video cameras, interactive boards, smartphones, and e-books (Bishop-Monroe, 2020; Ghazali, 2020; Ghounane, 2020; Mahyoob, 2020; Mbiydzenyuy & Silungwe, 2020; McGlynn & Kelly, 2020; Slutsky et al., 2021; Suleiman & Danmuchikwali, 2020; Szente, 2020). Virtual learning platforms and programs can also be used to maintain daily routines and provide information for parents and students on daily updates such as upcoming events, assignments, and weather (Suleiman & Danmuchikwali, 2020; Szente, 2020). Daily lessons within the learning platforms and programs may also be recorded for students and parents to reference (Mahyoob, 2020; Summers, 2020; Szente, 2020). Online assessments within virtual learning platforms should be based on projects and assignments that develop problem-solving and curiosity and that adhere to the learning objectives (Collins et al., 2020; Ghazali, 2020; Nasir, 2020; Slutsky et al., 2021; Suleiman & Danmuchikwali, 2020; Szente, 2020).

Virtual learning shares similarities with face-to-face learning (Huang et al., 2019; Nasir, 2020), especially when conducted synchronously because the students and teachers can communicate in real time, ask questions, and adjust the material and pacing as necessary (Bâcă, 2020; Bishop-Monroe, 2020; Mbiydzenyuy & Silungwe, 2020; Summers, 2020). Asynchronous learning is conducive to forms of collaboration and communication without the necessity of attending class in real time (Bâcă, 2020; Beckett, 2019; Cleveland-Innes et al., 2019; Collins et al., 2020; Mbiydzenyuy & Silungwe, 2020; Summers, 2020). Although the learning is student-centered in both scenarios and students may be able to access materials independently, teachers remain necessary for creating the content to be taught and personalizing the learning environment by creating welcome videos, including platform personalization with the use of colors and photos, and ensuring a variety of resources are used to maintain engagement and optimize the motivation technology facilitates in children (Ak & Gökdaş, 2021; Bishop-Monroe, 2020; Collins et al., 2020; Ghazali, 2020; Ghounane, 2020; Mbiydzenyuy & Silungwe, 2020; McGlynn & Kelly, 2020; Slutsky et al., 2021). Teachers also need to support the development of digital literacy and citizenship by teaching students about virtual ethics, safety, and responsibility concerning appropriate socialization, avoiding online distractions, and building online communities (Lauricella et al., 2020; Summers, 2020). Virtual learning can support social and character development when students and teachers work together to develop technology-informed environments and lessons that are safe, interactive, and conducive to reflective practices (Collins et al., 2020; Delacruz, 2019; Ghazali, 2020; Lauricella et al., 2020).

Convenience and flexibility are two of the most widely recognized benefits of virtual learning because virtual learning promotes deep learning and social development without the barriers of location, time, and pacing (Bâcă, 2020; Beckett, 2019; Bishop-Monroe, 2020; Cleveland-Innes et al., 2019; Ghazali, 2020; Huang et al., 2020; Mashifana, 2020; Mbiydzenyuy & Silungwe, 2020; Nasir, 2020; Suleiman & Danmuchikwali, 2020). Students can make choices in the platforms and methods of learning and can practice self-autonomy by taking responsibility for their learning, engagement, and motivation while also involving their parents in their education through the online platforms (Bâcă, 2020; Bishop-Monroe, 2020; Cleveland-Innes et al., 2019; Ghazali, 2020; Ghounane, 2020; McGlynn & Kelly, 2020; Nasir, 2020; Suleiman & Danmuchikwali, 2020; Szente, 2020). Students have consistent access to the materials and resources provided by their teachers and the internet, allowing them to collect and reference information, announcements, and personalized feedback as needed (Bâcă, 2020; Bishop-Monroe, 2020; Collins et al., 2020; Delacruz, 2019; Mahyoob, 2020; Mbiydzenyuy & Silungwe, 2020; McGlynn & Kelly, 2020; Nasir, 2020). Students may also use virtual learning environments to connect with people and places from all around the world, allowing them to become global citizens via research, virtual field trips, and socialization (Delacruz, 2019; Nasir, 2020; Suleiman & Danmuchikwali, 2020).

Although there are many benefits to virtual learning, there are challenges with this method of education as well. One of the greatest challenges of virtual learning is the existence of digital inequalities pertaining to limited bandwidth, internet services, available devices, and digital literacy (Cleveland-Innes et al., 2019; Collins et al., 2020;

Ghazali, 2020; Huang et al., 2020; Iivari et al., 2020; McGlynn & Kelly, 2020; Nasir, 2020; Slutsky et al., 2021; Szente, 2020). Digital devices, the internet, and the software required for virtual education can be very expensive, and paying for support for fixing tech issues and viruses as they arise when students and teachers do not have the ability to do so themselves can be a burden (Beckett, 2019; Cleveland-Innes et al., 2019; Collins et al., 2020; Delacruz, 2019; Ghazali, 2020; Huang et al., 2020; Mashifana, 2020; Mbiydzenyuy & Silungwe, 2020; Suleiman & Danmuchikwali, 2020). Students and teachers would benefit from training and professional development aimed at refining these skills and supporting the facilitation and participation in virtual learning (Ak & Gökdaş, 2021; Cleveland-Innes et al., 2019).

Students and teachers may also experience challenges with isolation due to a lack of face-to-face interaction and eye contact, especially when screens are turned off, causing many to prefer traditional face-to-face learning (Ak & Gökdaş, 2021; Bâcă, 2020; Mashifana, 2020; Nasir, 2020; Szente, 2020). The potential lack of socialization in a virtual environment and the amount of time students are required to spend sitting at the computer can negatively impact students' engagement and motivation (Cleveland-Innes et al., 2019; Nasir, 2020; Slutsky et al., 2021; Suleiman & Danmuchikwali, 2020). Teachers need to mix online and offline assignments, give students breaks from the computer, ensure opportunities for communication and participation in activities, and remain engaged and motivated to promote students' engagement and motivation (Mbiydzenyuy & Silungwe, 2020; McGlynn & Kelly, 2020; Summers, 2020; Szente, 2020). Students and teachers may also experience challenges with time management,

self-discipline, and balancing personal and educational uses of technology (Bâcă, 2020; Cleveland-Innes et al., 2019; Dinsmore, 2019; Ghazali, 2020; Suleiman & Danmuchikwali, 2020). Challenges with internet security, confidentiality, trust in online sources, and cyberbullying are also concerning; however, teachers have limited control over their students in this type of environment, so lessons in online etiquette and safety are essential (Cleveland-Innes et al., 2019; Collins et al., 2020; Dinsmore, 2019; Ghazali, 2020; Lauricella et al., 2020; Mbiydzenyuy & Silungwe, 2020; Suleiman & Danmuchikwali, 2020; Szente, 2020). Teachers may experience additional challenges with creating meaningful virtual lessons, particularly for subjects that require hands-on experience and participation (Cleveland-Innes et al., 2019; Collins et al., 2020; Slutsky et al., 2021; Suleiman & Danmuchikwali, 2020). Despite the many challenges and exhaustive efforts required of virtual education, teachers and students were excited about the many possibilities and opportunities of virtual education (Delacruz, 2019). Now that virtual education has gained popularity and is, in many cases, a necessity, it is essential that research on the new uses of technology, virtual and remote learning and teaching, and modern education continue.

Literature Related to Teacher Perspectives

Teacher perspectives are informed by the teacher's mindset on how they view themselves and their personal qualities such as their beliefs, personalities, skills, and knowledge (Boylan et al., 2018; Kotaman et al., 2018; Özdemir et al., 2019). Teacher perspectives are also informed by how the teacher views their professional abilities and relationships with their colleagues and students (Kotaman et al., 2018; Özdemir et al.,

2019). A teacher's professional and personal background can influence their perspectives, which may shift as the teacher continues to explore professional development, current developments in scientific data, and new life experiences (Clark, 2020; Özdemir et al., 2019). As teachers' perspectives change and grow, they need to be able to communicate their points of view to support personal and professional growth (Özdemir et al., 2019).

When stakeholders value teachers' opinions, their perspectives can lead to meaningful change and growth for the students, employees, and community (Boylan et al., 2018; Özdemir et al., 2019). Teachers' perspectives can provide valuable insight into what teachers do and need and why they think this way (Boylan et al., 2018). When teachers communicate these insights with stakeholders and administration, they introduce the potential for improvements and developments that can positively impact their students and colleagues (Boylan et al., 2018; Brodeur & Ortmann, 2018; Özdemir et al., 2019). Teachers who do not feel motivated or appreciated by their administration will be less likely to share their perspectives and will lose the desire to become better teachers and people for their students and schools, therefore, it is critical that teacher perspectives be studied (Özdemir et al., 2019).

Summary and Conclusions

I reviewed existing literature related to the community of inquiry model (see Garrison et al., 1999), COVID-19, the impact of COVID-19 on education, virtual education before and after the COVID-19 pandemic, and the need for teacher perspectives. Researchers found that the community of inquiry model and the balancing of social, cognitive, and teacher presences in online communities could support a

meaningful educational experience unrestricted by time and location (Cleveland-Innes et al., 2019; Garrison et al., 1999; Huang et al., 2019; Popescu & Badea, 2020). This model should be considered when exploring the shift to virtual and remote forms of education during the start of the COVID-19 pandemic that quickly swept across the world, closing schools and businesses (Bishop-Monroe, 2020; Bradley et al., 2020; Collins et al., 2020; Helding, 2020; Summers, 2020). Researchers have been able to collect an abundance of evidence on the benefits and challenges of virtual education as it became increasingly popular (Bishop-Monroe, 2020; Cleveland-Innes et al., 2019; Huang et al., 2019; Nasir, 2020). Researchers have also examined the need for teachers and students to use technology and develop digital literacy skills vital for the future (Ak & Gökdaş, 2021; Bâcă, 2020; Cleveland-Innes et al., 2019) as well as the need for teachers to communicate their progress, challenges, and perspectives to inform change and support improvements (Boylan et al., 2018; Özdemir et al., 2019).

After reviewing the literature, I found evidence that researchers have explored and conducted studies on COVID-19 and the impacts of this pandemic on education. Researchers have also explored virtual education, the community of inquiry framework, and the need for the administration to value and solicit teacher perspectives; however, there was a gap in the literature on the perspectives of early childhood teachers teaching remotely during a pandemic and what they need from school administration to teach children remotely. This gap supported the need for my research study.

In Chapter 3, I explain the methods I used in my study as I attempted to close the gap in the literature. Chapter 3 includes the research design and rationale; my role as the

researcher; the methodology I used, including the instrumentation, participant selection, data collection, and data analysis plans; and the ways in which I ensured a trustworthy and ethical study.

Chapter 3: Research Method

The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to explore the perspectives of early childhood teachers on teaching remotely during a pandemic and what support they need from school administration to do so. I focused specifically on the perspectives of early childhood teachers concerning their experiences teaching remotely during the 2019–2020 school year. This study was guided by Garrison et al.'s (1999) community of inquiry framework.

Chapter 3 includes information on the research design and rationale as well as the role of the researcher. In the methodology section of Chapter 3, I discuss the logic behind the participant selection process, instrumentation, procedures for recruitment, and data analysis plan. Chapter 3 also contains discussion of the trustworthiness of the study and ethical procedures.

Research Design and Rationale

The following research questions were addressed in this study:

RQ1: What are early childhood teachers' perspectives of using remote learning during a pandemic?

RQ2: What do early childhood teachers need from school administration to teach children remotely?

The phenomenon under study was remote learning because many teachers experienced transitioning to remote learning during the 2019–2020 school year due to the COVID-19 pandemic (see Bradley et al., 2020). Remote learning is a method of educating students either synchronously or asynchronously from a physical distance

(Pryor et al., 2020) due to an inability to participate in the typical, face-to-face classroom setting (Arquilla & Guzdial, 2020). In the spring of the 2019–2020 school year, remote learning was adopted to help mitigate the spread of COVID-19, forcing the traditional education system to transition to an online, physically independent platform (Arquilla & Guzdial, 2020; Bâcă, 2020).

I selected a basic qualitative design along with the use of semistructured interviews to explore the perspectives of early childhood teachers on teaching remotely during a pandemic and what support they need from school administration to do so. The qualitative approach is used to explore phenomena by studying natural situations and perspectives (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). I chose the qualitative method for this study because of the naturalistic approach of qualitative inquiry for exploring participants' perspectives. This was an appropriate methodology choice for this study because the use of qualitative data collection aligned with the purpose of this study and supported the understanding of the phenomenon being investigated (see Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Qualitative research is used for understanding experiences and perspectives, so the purpose of using interviews for qualitative research is to gain a deeper understanding of the participants' in-depth, personal accounts of the situation (Ravitch & Carl, 2016; Rubin & Rubin, 2012).

Role of the Researcher

I was the sole researcher responsible for all aspects (i.e., data collection, analysis, evaluation, and presentation) of this basic qualitative study. My role as interviewer in this study was based on the creation of interview questions and implementation of semistructured interviews with early childhood teacher participants who had experience

teaching remotely during the 2019–2020 school year affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. The interviewer of a qualitative study is typically responsible for scheduling interviews, preparing participants for their role in the interviews, conducting interviews that are safe and comfortable for both the interviewer and interviewee, recording the data gained from the interview, and interpreting the data to be included in the research study (Rubin & Rubin, 2012).

As the researcher, I ensured that I did not have any personal or professional relationships with the participants, including supervisory or instructor relationships involving power over the participants. The participants were recruited from the Walden University Participant Pool and early childhood teachers' social media groups. Once possible participants were recruited, I used snowball sampling as a method of avoiding researcher bias related to having preexisting relationships with the participants. The potential for other ethical issues and researcher bias existed; however, I mitigated those ethical issues by conducting the study separate from my work environment, avoiding the use of participation incentives, and implementing reflexivity with the use of reflective journaling as I moved through the study.

Methodology

Participant Selection Logic

The participants of this study were early childhood teachers with experience teaching remotely during the 2019–2020 school year affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. The participants were recruited from the Walden University Participant Pool and early childhood teachers' social media groups. For the purposes of this study, I

included a purposeful sample consisting of 10 participants who met the criteria of teaching early childhood education remotely during the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic during the 2019–2020 school year. Purposeful sampling helped to ensure that those participating in the study had the potential to provide in-depth data for answering the specific research questions of the study (see Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Snowball sampling, where interested participants help recruit other participants, was also used to assist in identifying and contacting early childhood teachers that met the specified criteria. The number of participants depended on achieving data saturation and continued to grow until saturation was met.

Instrumentation

For this basic qualitative study, I used semistructured interviews based on the research questions as the method of data collection. Conducting interviews allowed me to collect valuable qualitative data that is authentic, in depth, and rich in information (see Rubin & Rubin, 2012). I created research questions and interview questions (see Appendix A) that assisted in understanding teachers' perspectives on teaching remotely during a pandemic and what support they need from administration to do so. I also created an interview protocol form that supported the data collection process (see Appendix B). Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the expectation of social distancing, interviews were conducted via Zoom at the convenience of the participants. I used encouragement and follow-up questions, when necessary, to elicit expanded answers from the participants. All interviews were audio recorded for future reference and transcription to ensure data collection accuracy.

Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection

Before I could begin recruiting participants and collecting data, my proposed study needed to be reviewed by the Walden University Institutional Review Board (IRB) to ensure the safety of my participants. Upon approval, I began recruiting a participant sample consisting of a minimum of 10 to 12 early childhood teachers who had experience teaching remotely during the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic during the 2019–2020 school year. Teachers who met the inclusion criteria were recruited through the Walden University Participant Pool and educators' social media groups. Using virtual locations for recruitment helped me obtain a diverse group of participants. Initially, the recruitment process resulted in too few participants, so I contacted the teachers who agreed to participate and attempted to recruit more participants through snowball sampling.

Next, I obtained the participants' permission for taking part in the study with the use of an invitation and consent form so that they were aware of the details of the study, their rights to withdraw or ask questions, and what was to be expected. Once I had signed participation and consent forms from the participants, I scheduled one-on-one interviews so data could be collected from each participant. These interviews lasted approximately 40 to 60 minutes. The interviews were recorded for future reference via Zoom and later transcribed.

Before the interview began, I reminded the participant of the information included on the signed participation and consent forms and the fact that their responses would remain confidential. If the participants did not have any questions, the interview progressed adhering to the interview protocol with Questions 4, 5, and 6 relating to the

first research question and Questions 7 and 8 relating to the second research question. When the interview was over, I provided the participant with the opportunity to ask follow-up questions. The participant was then debriefed on the procedures to follow. I made them aware of their right to member check my summary of the study findings and adjust their responses if necessary. They were also provided with my contact information in case they had any follow-up questions. I collected their contact information in case I needed any of their responses clarified. Finally, I thanked them for their participation and ensured them that I would follow up with the results of my study once it was completed. Written notes of gratitude were mailed to each participant after the interviews as well.

Data Analysis Plan

For this basic qualitative study, I used Saldaña's (2015) *Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers* to examine the data and identify emerging patterns, categories, and themes. Data was collected via semistructured interviews. The interview responses were then analyzed and compared to make connections and uncover ideas, concepts, and theories.

The qualitative data analysis process for this study began with interviews that were audio recorded and then transcribed using an online transcription service called TranscribeMe. The transcriptions were produced and saved electronically in a password protected online account. Upon receiving the transcriptions, I began a detailed examination of the responses by reading the transcriptions a minimum of three times. I used open coding for initial data analysis. Key terms and phrases that stood out as they were read were coded (see Saldaña, 2015). I used different colored highlighters to

distinguish the open codes (see Saldaña, 2015). In the following rounds of coding, I focused on coding data that connected with specific aspects of the research questions (see Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Open codes were used to organize the data into manageable units for analysis to help me discover ideas, concepts, and theories (see Saldaña, 2015).

Next, I used axial coding to search for emerging categories and subcategories among the open codes. I created an organized list in Google Docs to separate similar key terms and highlighted colors into categories. Creating categories of common data allowed me to begin searching for emerging themes (see Ravitch & Carl, 2016; Saldaña, 2015). I used Saldaña's (2015) method of thematic analysis to identify and analyze the emergent themes. The analysis and emergence of these themes supported answering the research questions of this study (see Ravitch & Carl, 2016; Saldaña, 2015). I continued to collect and analyze data until saturation was met and no new themes or patterns emerged from the data (see Burkholder et al., 2016).

The analysis of data uncovered themes related to early childhood teachers' perspectives on teaching remotely during a pandemic and what support they need from school administration to do so. Part of the data analysis plan for qualitative research is understanding how to treat discrepant cases. Discrepant data are data that emerges during analysis that the researcher did not expect and may believe to be contradictory to the emergent patterns and themes (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). This data needs to be included in the findings of the study to provide representation of all perspectives and ensure the study's trustworthiness (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). To ensure validity, credibility, and

trustworthiness, I used member checking and included all data, including discrepant data, in this study so that other researchers have access to every gained perspective.

Issues of Trustworthiness

Qualitative researchers need to provide a level of validity, quality, and trustworthiness that can rival the trust researchers have in quantitative research (Rettke et al., 2018). The validity of a qualitative study is the result of remaining true to the participants' experiences (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). The quality of a qualitative study is the result of the rigor and detail of the methodology (Rettke et al., 2018). The trustworthiness of a qualitative study is the result of the researcher ensuring the study's credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Burkholder et al., 2016).

In qualitative research, it is critical to establish the credibility, or confidence in the truth of the study's findings to ensure the rigor of the findings (see Burkholder et al., 2016). According to Ravitch and Carl (2016), credibility is best established when multiple methods of data collection are employed. For this study, I used audio recordings of the interviews and took notes during each interview to ensure that every detail, including my personal interpretations, was accurately captured. I allowed the participants to member check a two-page summary of their interview to ensure that the data was valid and that I properly interpreted and portrayed their point of view. Member checks are considered one of the best methods of ensuring credibility because they allow participants to review and edit their responses and then provide feedback on the findings based on their responses (Ravitch & Carl, 2016).

The transferability of a qualitative research study determines whether the study is generalizable and can be replicated or transferred to other settings (Ravitch & Carl, 2016; Rubin & Rubin, 2012). For this study, I ensured transferability by providing thick descriptions of the data collected and methodology used. This allows my readers to make connections and decide if any elements of the study could be transferred to future studies. I also ensured transferability by including variation in participant selection for the study. Participants were recruited via the Walden University Participant Pool, early childhood teachers' social media groups, and snowball sampling, which supported the recruitment of participants from various locations in the United States. The criteria for participation also allowed for participants of varying ages within the early childhood field and years of experience, which also supported transferability.

The dependability of a qualitative research study determines whether the data would remain stable and consistent if the study were to be replicated (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). For this study, I ensured dependability by following the research methodology consistently with every participant (see Ravitch & Carl, 2016). I also made sure that every participant understood that their participation was voluntary and that they could choose to withdraw from the study at any time. Additionally, dependability was maintained through use of an audit trail, or reflexive journal, of the experiences and situations surrounding the data collection and analysis processes.

The confirmability of a qualitative research study determines whether the data were appropriately interpreted in the study and can be confirmed by other researchers (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). For this study, I ensured confirmability by participating in

reflexive practices with the use of reflective journaling as I moved through the study. This method of personal scrutiny ensured that any bias and assumptions were explained or eliminated (see Shenton, 2004). Reflexive practices also showed that I kept accurate records of the research process and provided a record of any adjustments made throughout the duration of the study (see Burkholder et al., 2016).

Ethical Procedures

Due to the personally inquisitive nature of qualitative research collected through interviews, there are unique ethical challenges concerning the participants, such as protecting their privacy, minimizing harm to them, and respecting the shared experiences of others (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). To ensure ethical compliance, I refrained from collecting data for this study until I received IRB approval to do so. The purpose of IRB approval is to ensure that all human participants in the study are protected from potential harm in accordance with Walden University's standards and federal regulations.

After receiving approval from the IRB, I emailed each potential participant an invitation and consent form that they needed to sign and return to me before data collection commenced. This ensured that all participants were aware that their privacy was valued and protected and that no harm would come to them. I also made sure that the participants understand that their participation was voluntary and that they could withdraw from the study at any time. I did not have any personal or professional affiliations with the participants or the districts they work for. During the interviews, the participants' comfort was continuously monitored, and I periodically asked them if they felt comfortable continuing with the study. Their personal information was not shared

with anyone, and pseudonyms were used to refer to the participants when presenting their responses. I will maintain all records and data in a password-protected file on my personal computer for 5 years before erasing it.

Summary

In this chapter, I presented information on the research design and rationale as well as the role of the researcher. As discussed in this chapter, the methodology chosen for this study was qualitative, and semistructured, one-on-one interviews were selected as the data collection method. I also discussed the logic behind the participant selection process, instrumentation, procedures for recruitment, and data analysis plan. Information was also provided on the trustworthiness of the study and the ethical procedures followed throughout the processes of conducting and presenting the study. An application for IRB approval was submitted before I began collecting data for this study. Once approval was granted, I proceeded with the recruitment of participants, collection of participant consent forms, ethically informed interviews, and the transcription and interpretation of all collected data. In Chapter 4, I present the findings of my study, including the setting, demographics, data collection, data analysis, evidence of trustworthiness, and results.

Chapter 4: Results

The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to explore the perspectives of early childhood teachers regarding teaching remotely during a pandemic and what they need from school administration to teach children remotely. I used purposeful sampling and snowball sampling to recruit early childhood educator participants for this study. I emailed interested participants an invitation and consent form to review before agreeing to participate in the study by responding with the phrase "I consent." I scheduled the interviews with each participant and then conducted the interviews via Zoom. Each interview was audio recorded, transcribed, and then analyzed using open coding. The data were further analyzed for emerging categories and themes. Chapter 4 includes the analysis of collected data, including a description of the setting, demographics, data collection procedures, data analysis procedures, evidence of trustworthiness, and results of the study.

Setting of the Study

I conducted individual, semistructured interviews from my home office via Zoom. The participants for this study were selected using purposeful sampling and snowball sampling. A total of 10 early childhood educators participated in this study. Each participant had experience teaching remotely during the 2019-2020 school year due to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.

There were no unexpected conditions or situations that affected the interpretations of the study results. Data were collected from 10 early childhood educators using individual semistructured interviews via Zoom. All interviews were audio recorded and

transcribed verbatim using a transcription service called TranscribeMe before the coding and analysis process began.

Demographics

I conducted this study with 10 early childhood educators from across the United States. All 10 participants were early childhood educators with experience teaching remotely during the 2019-2020 school year due to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Participants teaching experience prior to the 2019/2020 school year ranged from 5 to 37 years. The teacher participants taught Grades Pre-K to 5 and were between 29 and 58 years old. Each participant shared their personal perspectives for this study, so I assigned each participant a pseudonym to ensure confidentiality. Table 1 summarizes participants' pseudonyms, years of teaching experience prior to the 2019/2020 school year, current grades being taught, and current ages.

Table 1

Research Participants

Participant	Years of teaching experience prior to the 2019/2020 school year	Grades taught	Age
T1	14	3-5	37
T2	17	2	50
T3	37	K-1	58
T4	13	Pre-K	36
T5	23	2, 4, 5	47
T6	15	1	39
T7	6	2-3	35
T8	21	K-2	43
T9	26	K-3	46
T10	5	2-4	29

Data Collection

I began the data collection process once I received approval from Walden University's IRB. The IRB approval number was 10-22-21-0990777. I used purposeful sampling as well as snowball sampling to recruit the participants for this study. I emailed potential, interested participants an invitation and consent form that included information on the background, purpose, procedures, sample questions, voluntary nature, risks and benefits, privacy, and contacts. Interested participants reviewed the form and responded to my email with the phrase "I consent" to express their interest in participating in the study. Data from 10 early childhood teachers were collected using individual, semistructured interviews conducted via Zoom from my home and then audio recorded with my phone.

The data collection process took approximately 7 weeks. Each participant provided me with a date and time that worked for their schedules and then we met to

conduct the interview via Zoom. I interviewed each participant one time for approximately 40-60 minutes, depending on how much information each participant shared. I asked each participant the same interview questions to ensure reliability and to guarantee that I collected all the data I would need. At the beginning of each interview, I reminded the participants of the purpose of the study, the expectations of the interview, and their right to withdraw from the study at any time. I maintained a reflective journal to record my experiences and my personal thoughts and feelings to manage the potential for any bias. All interviews were audio recorded using my phone and then transcribed using a transcription service called TranscribeMe.

After each interview, I provided the participants with the opportunity to ask follow-up questions. The participants were then debriefed on the procedures to follow. I made them aware of their right to member check my summary of the study findings and adjust their responses if necessary. They were also provided with my contact information in case they had any follow-up questions. I collected their contact information in case I needed any of their responses clarified. Finally, I thanked them for their participation and ensured them that I would follow up with the results of my study once it was completed. Written notes of gratitude were mailed to each participant after the interviews as well.

I will maintain all records and data in a password-protected file on my personal computer for 5 years before erasing it. I am the only person with access to the stored data. I did not deviate from the original data collection process planned and shared in Chapter 3. I did not encounter any unusual circumstances during the data collection process.

Data Analysis

In this basic qualitative study, I used semistructured interviews to explore early childhood teachers' perspectives regarding teaching remotely during a pandemic and what they need from school administration to teach children remotely. All 10 participants were asked the same interview questions in the same order. The interviews were audio recorded and transcribed using the online transcription service called TranscribeMe. I then compared the transcripts with the recorded audio to ensure accuracy. I began to analyze the data by reading and rereading the transcriptions while taking notes in a reflexive journal. Then, I analyzed the data and applied open coding to any key terms or phrases that related to the study's conceptual framework or that could answer the study's research questions. Next, I applied axial coding by grouping the key terms and phrases into categories and then themes based on existing similarities.

Interview Analysis

For this basic qualitative study, I used Saldaña's (2015) *Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers.* The steps that I followed to complete the data analysis process included

1. Organize and prepare data
2. Review and become familiar with data
3. Begin to code the data
4. Generate themes
5. Discuss the findings
6. Validate the findings

There were no unusual conditions that affected the data analysis process. I did not find any evidence that would oppose the findings of this research study during the data analysis process.

Step 1: Organize and Prepare Data

For the first step of the data analysis process, I organized and prepared my data. I uploaded each audio recorded interview into the transcription service called TranscribeMe. Upon receiving the transcripts, I read through each one as I listened to the audio to compare and ensure that each interview was accurately transcribed. I printed the transcriptions and sorted them in the order they were conducted. I assigned each participant with a pseudonym to maintain confidentiality and labeled the printed transcriptions with the participants' pseudonyms.

Step 2: Review and Become Familiar with Data

For the second step of the data analysis process, I read through each transcription three times to familiarize myself with the interview data. As I read through the transcriptions, I took notes in my reflexive journal.

Step 3: Begin to Code the Data

The third step of my data analysis process was divided into two phases: open and axial coding. For the first phase, I used open coding to code the interview data. I reread each line of the transcripts and highlighted key terms and phrases relevant to my research questions and conceptual framework. I used colored highlighters to organize the key terms and phrases into three categories. I used green for any key terms and phrases relevant to the first research question, I used pink for any key terms and phrases relevant

to the second research question, and I used yellow for any key terms and phrases relevant to the conceptual framework. I compiled three lists of highlighted key terms and phrases in Google Docs and then assigned each piece of data with an open code based on similarities and common characteristics. From the data, 53 open codes emerged. Table 2 includes a sample of nine of the open codes, participant identifiers, and excerpts from that data that correspond with each code.

Table 2

Examples of Open Codes

Code	Participant	Excerpt
Uncertainty	T1	"They told us just to take our stuff and it would probably be anywhere from a day to a week that we would be out."
	T5	"It was originally a lot of confusion and unknowns."
Time to set up	T1	"It took probably about a month before we got the Google Classroom set up."
	T7	"The process of kind of getting kids started on Google Classroom, learning how to use it, and all doing this all virtually was very tough
Extra responsibilities	T4	"They told us to contact our families and see what they needed, but then if they needed anything that was kind of up to me to help them find it."
	T8	"Recreating the wheel and going strictly to remote with creating slides and how to input them and making them interactive… it was a struggle for everyone."
Lack of skills	T2	"Teachers that struggle with technology were really…it kind of threw them into a whirlwind of not only, 'how do I teach in this mode?', but 'I don't even know how to work the technology.'."
	T7	"…need beforehand? Probably a better understanding of how Google Classroom worked - how to start it up."
Unprepared	T4	"I don't think that they were prepared to have us working remotely, teaching preschool."
	T6	"We kind of had a warning it was coming."
Positive parent involvement	T1	"Communication with families was wonderful."
	T9	"It made us closer to the parents because we were in their houses."
Lack of support from administration	T1	"Superintendents, directors? Yeah, I just don't think they had any clue, kind of what was going on in our homes, in our classroom."
	T5	"If you found a student wasn't really attending or logging in at all and doing any of the work, we needed that support."
Social experiences	T2	"I found that even more challenging, trying to fill social emotional needs because it just was much easier to do so with children that were in person."
	T10	"Just having the kids talk to each other, like I would pick like a random question on the smart board…just to have conversations about anything."
Gaps in learning	T6	"…which doesn't seem to be nearly what they would have got being in the building."
	T8	"…just to try to keep all their skills up."

For the second phase of coding, I used axial coding to organize the open codes into categories according to their commonalities. I turned the list of open codes in Google Docs into a chart that provided me with a visual of which open codes could be condensed or combined into groups based on their similarities. Once I created the groups of similar codes, I named each group and used them as my categories. From the open codes, 10 categories were created to group the open codes. Table 3 includes a sample of six categories, some of the relevant open codes, participant identifiers, and excerpts from that data that corresponds with each of the open codes and category.

Table 3

Examples of Open Codes and Categories

Category	Code	Participant	Excerpt
Social emotional priority	Challenge to maintain social experiences	T1	"Building emotional relationships, building social relationships right now is starting to happen. It's just been very difficult."
	Connected to students	T5	"…a relief to be able to log in and see your students. It felt more like real teaching."
	Social Experiences	T6	"I wanted to keep the academics going, but the social part was really important for me."
Challenges with transition to remote learning	Uncertainty	T2	"…sometimes hard, especially with all the unknown factors there are."
	Unprepared	T2	"Our district was not at all prepared to handle something like that."
	Lack of technology	T3	"Most of these families didn't have wi-fi service that was strong enough."
	No training	T4	"…helpful if there would have been some type of training on this remote learning."
	Engagement	T4	"It was kind of disheartening because I made my Youtube channel and was able to see how many people watched."
	Lack of skills	T5	"…weren't really familiar with how to build and to post online assignments."
	Challenging	T10	"… hard for us because we're just not used to that."
Increased stress and workload of teachers	Extra responsibilities	T1	"You were working harder than before."
	Teacher expectations	T2	"…more guidelines as far as on what the expectations were."
	Time to set up	T6	"I spent a lot of time setting up."
Need for professional development and resources	Technology resources	T6	"…searching for some of those digital resources that had the counters, the dice to roll, anything that we might possibly need."
	Professional development	T7	"It's also important that in the future teachers are given more professional development on this."
Facilitating cognitive experiences	Cognitive skills	T2	"We were required to do both synchronous and asynchronous learning."
	Curriculum options	T6	"…find online resources and different things the kids could do around that subject."
	Gaps in Learning	T8	"…doesn't seem to be nearly what they would have got being in the building."
Administrative support	Lack of administration communication	T1	"Communication with staff and administration and families could have been a lot better."
	Lack of support from administration	T6	"…needed administrators to stand behind me."
	Lack of support from administration	T8	"You felt unsupported."
	Administration tried their best	T9	"They were learning just like we were."

Step 4: Generate Themes

Upon completion of axial coding, I searched the categories for emerging themes. I combined categories with similarities as I searched for emerging themes based on the categories' characteristics. I organized each emergent theme by the research question each theme answered. I ensured that each theme was aligned with the conceptual framework, the literature, and the research questions of the study. Four themes emerged: (a) teachers were not prepared to teach remotely during the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, (b) teachers were personally and professionally stressed by increased family and work demands, (c) teachers prioritized social emotional learning and experiences along with cognitive experiences while teaching remotely, and (d) teachers needed resources and support from their administration to teach children remotely. Table 4 includes the categories and corresponding themes that emerged during thematic analysis related to each of the study's research questions.

Table 4

Categories and Themes

RQ1: What are early childhood teachers' perspectives of using remote learning during a crisis?	
Category	Theme
Unprepared for the transition Challenges with transition to remote learning	Theme A: Teachers were not prepared to teach remotely during the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.
Increased stress and workload for teachers Increased family struggles	Theme B: Teachers were personally and professionally stressed by increased family and work demands.
Social emotional priority Facilitating cognitive experiences Connections between staff, families, and students	Theme C: Teachers prioritized social emotional learning and experiences along with cognitive experiences while teaching remotely.
RQ2: What do early childhood teachers need from school administration to teach children remotely?	
Category	Theme
Administrative support Need for professional development and resources	Theme D: Teachers needed resources and support from their administration to teach children remotely.

Step 5: Discuss the Findings

The results of the data analysis revealed four themes related to the study's research questions. Three themes emerged for Research Question 1 and one theme emerged for Research Question 2 (see Table 4). After a complete analysis of the data, I used the emergent themes to answer the research questions of the study.

Step 6: Validate the Findings

To validate the findings, I allowed the participants to member check a two-page summary of their interview and the results of the study. This method was used to ensure that the data was valid and that I properly interpreted and portrayed each participant's individual point of view. The participants did not dispute any of the findings, nor did they offer any additional data. I also compared the emerging themes to the current literature and the study's conceptual framework to ensure the validity of my findings.

Evidence of Trustworthiness

Qualitative researchers need to provide a level of rigor that can rival the trust researchers have in quantitative research (Rettke et al., 2018). Rigor is established through the trustworthiness of a qualitative study and is the result of the researcher ensuring the study's credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Burkholder et al., 2016). I provided evidence of trustworthiness for this study by applying credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability strategies throughout the data collection and analysis processes of this study.

Credibility

In qualitative research, it is critical to establish the credibility, or confidence in the truth of the study's findings to ensure the rigor of the findings (see Burkholder et al., 2016). Credibility is best established when multiple methods of data collection are employed (Ravitch and Carl, 2016). For this study, I established credibility by using audio recordings of the interviews as well as taking notes during each interview to ensure that every detail, including my personal interpretations, was accurately captured. I also allowed the participants to member check a two-page summary of their interview to ensure that the data was valid and that I properly interpreted and portrayed their point of view. Member checks are considered one of the best methods of ensuring credibility because they allow participants to review and edit their responses and then provide feedback on the findings based on their responses (Ravitch & Carl, 2016).

Transferability

The transferability of a qualitative research study determines whether the study is generalizable and can be replicated or transferred to other settings (Ravitch & Carl, 2016; Rubin & Rubin, 2012). For this study, I ensured transferability by providing thick descriptions of the data collected and methodology used. This allows my readers to make connections and decide if any elements of the study could be transferred to future studies. I also ensured transferability by including variation in participant selection for the study. Participants were recruited via the Walden University Participant Pool, early childhood teachers' social media groups, and snowball sampling, which supported the recruitment of participants from various locations in the United States. The criteria for participation

allowed for participants of varying ages within the early childhood field and years of experience, which also supported transferability.

Dependability

The dependability of a qualitative research study determines whether the data would remain stable and consistent if the study were to be replicated (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). For this study, I ensured dependability by following the research methodology consistently with every participant (see Ravitch & Carl, 2016). I also made sure that every participant understood that their participation was voluntary and that they could choose to withdraw from the study at any time. Additionally, dependability was maintained through use of an audit trail, or reflexive journal, of the experiences and situations surrounding the data collection and analysis processes.

Confirmability

The confirmability of a qualitative research study determines whether the data were appropriately interpreted in the study and can be confirmed by other researchers (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). For this study, I ensured confirmability by participating in reflexive practices with the use of reflective journaling as I moved through each step of the study. This method of personal scrutiny ensured that any bias and assumptions were explained or eliminated (see Shenton, 2004). Reflexive practices also showed that I kept accurate records of the research process and provided a record of each step and process throughout the duration of the study (see Burkholder et al., 2016).

Results of the Study

I explored the perspectives of early childhood teachers regarding teaching remotely during a pandemic and what they need from school administration to teach children remotely through a basic qualitative study using semi-structured interviews. In this section, I present the results of the data that I collected from 10 interviews with early childhood educators in which I asked eight open-ended questions and a minimum of two follow up questions allowing participants to provide in-depth, thoughtful responses (see Appendix A).

The first research question focused on early childhood teachers' perspectives regarding teaching remotely during a pandemic. Interview questions four, five, and eight addressed this research question. Three themes emerged from the data collected from these interviews regarding the first research question. The themes were: (a) teachers were not prepared to teach remotely during the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, (b) teachers were personally and professionally stressed by increased family and work demands, and (c) teachers prioritized social emotional learning and experiences along with cognitive experiences while teaching remotely.

The second research question focused on what early childhood teachers need from school administration to teach children remotely. Interview questions six and seven addressed this research question. A fourth theme emerged from the data collected from these interviews regarding the second research question. The fourth theme was: (d) teachers needed resources and support from their administration to teach children remotely.

Theme A: Teachers Were Not Prepared to Teach Remotely During the Onset of the COVID-19 Pandemic

Unprepared for the Transition

Each of the 10 participants interviewed expressed feeling unprepared for the abrupt transition to teaching remotely due to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in the 2019/2020 school year. Many described the experience as chaotic, sudden, and unexpected.

> T1 explained how sudden the transition to remote teaching was. She stated,
>
> So that March, in March that Friday, they told us just to take our stuff and that it would probably be anywhere from a day to a week that we would be out. And, you know, we didn't know if we were going to be teaching, if we weren't going to be teaching, and we definitely didn't know we were going to be online teaching. So, what I'm going to say is one day we got a phone call saying that we were going to be doing Google Classroom and it was pretty much, do it. There was no training. There was no anything.

T2 agreed and explained, “It was a hot mess. It was just very sudden. Our district was not at all prepared to handle something like that.” T4 explained that the agency she worked for was unprepared for the transition, saying, “The agency I worked for had nothing in place for remote learning. We went out on March 13th thinking that it was 2 weeks and everybody would return and we would go back to normal.” T5 described the onset of the transition, explaining,

> It was originally a lot of confusion and unknowns and kind of going between trying to wrap your head around being able to actually make connections because it was so... it was such a drastic difference than face to face instruction at that time, having never done it before. So, I would say it was kind of hectic and a lot of unknowns at the beginning.

Similarly, T10 described the experience as "awful", stating, "It was very difficult because we were not given instruction. Nobody knew what to do. People were scrambling."

Challenges with Transition to Remote Learning

The participants experienced a variety of challenges related to the transition to remote teaching during the 2019/2020 school year. For many of the participants, adjusting to the new technology necessary for teaching children remotely was challenging. T7 stated,

> You know, I've never worked with Google Classroom before. That was something pretty brand new to me. So, the process of kind of getting the kids started on Google Classroom, learning how to use it, and doing this all virtually was very tough. It was also difficult to transition from a lot of paperwork to then transitioning to online.

Similarly, T8 stated, "Recreating the wheel and going strictly to remote with creating slides and how to input them and making them interactive was a struggle for everyone. They spent hours and hours." T9 explained the challenge adjusting to the new technology they were required to use. She stated, "We didn't know much about Google Classroom.

We didn't know much about any of that stuff. So, everything was kind of nerve wracking and, you know, kind of uneasy."

Of the 10 participants interviewed for this study, 7 of them expressed experiencing challenges maintaining students' attention and engagement in the remote setting. T2 described one of the challenges in the remote setting being engagement. She said,

> Engagement. I think that was certainly one of the largest issues of all of the virtual … it's just hard to keep them tuned in and it's hard. You feel like you're a performer, you know, trying to be so animated that they stay tuned in, but you still lose them, unfortunately.

T6 also mentioned how difficult it was to maintain the students' attention in the remote setting. She explained,

> I had to spice things up a little more and put in some more themed days and fun activities that could kind of grab their interest and do some projects that I could pull them into to really, kind of, get them to join us to keep that social emotional going along with the academics.

T6 explained that it was difficult teaching remotely without the home support, saying, "It's very hard to fill the gaps educationally and without home support, it's really hard with these kids because it's them on the computer and they really need someone at home to be supportive."

Many participants also expressed experiencing challenges caused by digital inequalities including a lack of resources such as wi-fi, devices, and necessary digital skills. T3 stated,

> Not everyone had devices or access to the internet. Right? I think that was the hardest part. You had a family who was at home and at that time, you know, at the beginning of the pandemic, I mean so many of these families … You had a parent working who had to suddenly work from home, you had maybe 1, 2, 3 children who suddenly needed access to the internet, and most of these families didn't have wi-fi service that was strong enough to provide that kind of access to everyone in the family. So, I know that there were several families that were picking and choosing who was learning that day. And we had to be okay with that.

T8 described another challenge with digital inequalities, explaining, "Trying to help our parents with a lot of language barriers get hooked up remotely and get devices to them … It was not easy. It was chaotic." T10 experiences challenges with a variety of digital inequalities, describing her experience by explaining,

> The experience was extremely difficult. I work in a low-income community, so the kids getting devices was a struggle. The wi-fi was a struggle and, you know, having multiple children in the house and their families, you know, who needed a device. So, it was a struggle the whole time.

Theme B: Teachers Were Personally and Professionally Stressed by Increased Family and Work Demands

Increased Stress and Workload for Teachers

Many of the participants expressed that they experienced stress due to the increased workload, expectations, and responsibilities put on them during the transition to remote teaching. T1 explained how the added responsibilities were frustrating, explaining,

> Everything was kind of put on us. "Go through the teacher," you know, "she'll figure it out. She'll tell you where to go. She'll tell you what to do." And at that point, I was tech support. I was taking phone calls at, you know, nine, 10, 11 o'clock at night from parents that were just getting off of work. I had parents that just "why aren't you on the computer, right this second?" So, everybody was very frustrated and didn't know what to do.

T4 described how she had extra responsibilities due to the transition to remote learning, sharing,

> So personally, what I did besides delivering lunches was I sat at my school the one day to pass out books to families if they wanted them and I made YouTube videos to read aloud and do number identification activities, letter identification activities, and it was just a lot of calling the families just to see if I could provide any services or support.

T8 described the pressure she felt, stating,

> If you didn't get it done or you couldn't meet for three hours, you just felt like you were looked … it was frowned upon, like you were not doing the job. If you had other colleagues that, let's say, were spending hours working on all these things, but you couldn't, you felt the pressure.

T9 also described some of the added responsibilities and increased workload, stating, "Sometimes they would say to us, 'Don't get to … after hours, don't talk to the parents,' but like we were in their houses. It was almost impossible. Parents would call us."

Increased Family Struggles

For some of the participants and their students, the transition to remote teaching increased personal struggles they were experiencing with their own families as well. T1 and T4 both mentioned the fact that they were simultaneously dealing with their own school age children transitioning to remote learning while they transitioned to remote teaching. T4 explained, "I feel like my personal children, they did what they did just to kind of get by because I wasn't always there to help them with their schoolwork. I was teaching remotely too." T1 described how the transition impacted her husband and her personal life, sharing,

> I was up every night until about one o'clock in the morning. My husband looked at me one day and he's like, I feel like you're not even here anymore. And I wasn't because I was making these classrooms, these assignments, to differentiate each student, and it just took so much time.

T1 also shared how she did not believe her administration understood that the teachers' home lives were being impacted, explaining, "I just don't think they had any clue. Kind

of what was going on in our homes, in our classroom. Like, I just don't think they realized how much work was actually put on you as a teacher." T4 shared how the transition impacted the family's she worked with, stating, "I think that everybody was just not mentally well. You have parents that were severely afraid, so they weren't focused on getting their child online." T4 shared a specific situation, saying,

> I had a mom contact me, return my phone call and say, 'I don't have any food now for my kids. I rely on my kids eating lunch at school,' and my agency didn't really have anything in place. They wanted me to make sure that they were okay, but they didn't tell me what to do if they weren't okay. At the time, I contacted my church because I know they have a food pantry.

Similarly, T3 shared an experience, saying,

> And now we're worried about kids that are home all day. These are children, she had 2 grandchildren, who used to eat breakfast and lunch at school and now she has to get food for those kids, right? And where was that money coming from? And how is she doing the shopping? So, another thing we kind of did as a staff was, we kept track of that kind of situation. I mean, I went over and picked up food boxes at the school and delivered them to that house a couple of times.

T3 explained further, stating, "We were really being emphasized that we were to be making sure kids were okay, that they felt safe, they weren't scared, that we were somehow still a world outside there that they could connect to."

Theme C: Teachers Prioritized Social Emotional Learning and Experiences Along With Cognitive Experiences While Teaching Remotely

Social Emotional Priority

All of the participants described their experiences facilitating social experiences in the remote setting and many of the participants emphasized that social emotional learning and experiences were a priority for them in the 2019/2020 school year. T3 explained that she prioritized emotional experiences over cognitive during the transition, stating,

> As far as the cognitive piece, it was secondary to the emotional piece. We were really being emphasized that we were to be making sure kids were okay, that they felt safe, that they weren't scared, that we were somehow still a world outside there that they could connect to.

T6 described how she engaged the students in social experiences, saying,

> The most I could do to get them to come, to socialize with each other, to have fun. And at that point, you know, I wanted to keep the academics going, but the social part was really important for me to keep them at home. And I knew their parents were gone a lot, so, not to just kind of stagnant lay and not have social interactions that I knew they really needed and would miss out on.

T6 also stated, "I think for me, most important, we're giving them those social things along with educational, to try to at least build those social skills and the emotional part." T7 described her experiences engaging the students in social experiences, sharing,

> So, every morning I had a group meeting with my students and it gave them an opportunity to get on and talk to each other and to talk about how things are going, how their day is different, things that they're doing now that they're home and get to see each other. And, you know, just … I would give a lot of time to just let them talk and let them have fun and joke around and have those situations where they could, you know, talk about things they would talk about in the classroom.

T10 shared her similar experiences, saying,

> Trying to build into that, you know, like build in just having the kids talk to each other. Like I would pick random questions on the smart board. I would have up, you know, what did we eat for lunch yesterday or what games do we like to play, just to have a conversation about anything.

Facilitating Cognitive Experiences

All of the participants described their experiences facilitating cognitive experiences in the remote setting. T2 described how she facilitated cognitive experiences, explaining,

> We were required to do both synchronous and asynchronous learning where you would kind of teach a skill group. And I did try to cover all the subjects. Of course, we focus more on probably reading and math just because that's ... when you only have a short amount of time, that probably needs to be the focus, but then they would have their independent work. So, we try to model it like we do in

> the classroom where you do, you know, the introduction and I model and then there is independent practice as much as it's possible.

T2 also shared,

> We would have lots of brain breaks because, you know that they're seven years old, so they can only sit and stare at a screen for so long. So, we would do, you know The Silly Go Noodles videos or go run around your house and come back in two minutes kind of thing.

T6 explained how she used manipulatives with the students when facilitating cognitive experiences, explaining,

> I had them kind of get together a box of manipulatives and I listed a whole bunch of things they could possibly have that they could keep close. So, when I was working with them, if I wanted them to pull something and some kind of a hands-on thing or a manipulative that they had something at their fingertips that they could use, because for me, connecting the speech sounds with those manipulatives or even in math, they needed those hands-on experiences that they were missing out on home that I couldn't give them in the classroom.

For some participants, the cognitive experiences revolved around reviewing material that was already taught before the transition to remote teaching.

T2 explained why her district was able to use the remainder of year for reviewing, explaining,

> In our district, we were kind of closing in on standards because standardized testing was getting ready to begin. So thankfully, most of what they absolutely

> had to know had already been covered. So, we were able to kind of go into review mode, which was good.

T5 explained that her district chose to focus on reviewing as well, sharing,

> It was meant to be a review of everything they've done so far that year. We weren't to teach anything new. So basically, we did, you know, phonics activity, phonemic activities. I worked on the fluency team: fluency activities, comprehension, vocabulary and we came up with so many activities per week and put this on a display choice board.

Some participants discussed that they felt the priority was to keep the students in a learning mode while they were home. T3 shared her experience with this, stating,

> When I say learning mode, I mean, that you're still engaging with the content of the world and not necessarily just kind of like, 'okay, well, I'll play video games until it's over.' So, I still had kids reading our articles. I still had kids that were showing me different kinds of puzzles they could do in math. Science was happening. Social studies, maybe not directly with the curriculum of their grade level directly, but dealing with the pandemic and kind of that became a social curriculum for us.

T8 explained how she was focusing on maintaining the students' skills while they were home, sharing,

> When you go into Google slides it makes it interactive on all parties involved. So, the kids are able to move whatever, the circle you put or a triangle, to the correct

> answer or incorrect answer … a lot of videos, you know, just try to keep all their skills up.

Connections Between Staff, Families, and Students

As participants described their experiences facilitating social and cognitive experiences for their students in the remote setting, many discussed the focus they put on making connections and the connections they made with the staff, their students, and their students' families. T3 explained, "You know what, for me, the whole thing was to stay connected to kids. It still is." T5 appreciated the opportunity to connect with her students. She shared, "Just the idea of video conferencing as a new teaching technique and as a way to connect with your students was pretty amazing." T8 described her experiences connecting with the students and their families, sharing,

> I feel that we became more of a family organization with our students. The support through the teachers and the parents. You know, it just, you got a glimpse into their everyday life. They got a glimpse into your life, while you're sitting on your couch or in your basement or in a corner doing a remote lesson and your dog or your own child came in or their siblings came in, you know, it was just that. I liked that part of it. I liked being able to see them in their own environment; how they interact with their family.

In an attempt to foster connections, T2 stated,

> We had a lot of discussions about what was going on in the world. We did some silly things like a virtual talent show and I invited them and sent out invitations for that. So, I tried to keep that classroom connection going, both through

> discussions and like shared experiences. And you know sometimes share your animal or share your siblings or a piece of artwork or, yeah, it was something different every week so that they enjoyed that and that was a nice way to kind of keep everybody connected.

T5 shared how she fostered connections with her students, saying,

> I would say, join their classroom meets through Google Meet and we would have different activities where they could share a lot of like show and tell, a lot of like kind of Kahoot games or quiz games, trivia games, sharing different experiences... because they were at home. A lot of pets, a lot of show and tell with pets, and things like that…dress up days, theme days, different things like that to try and have the kids to relate to each other, even though it was through the screen.

T6 attempted to foster connections with the parents of her students. She described a way in which she was able to do this, sharing,

> I did Tuesday and Thursday Tea Time where parents could just tea and talk to me because the parents were going through a lot, which was reflective on the students. And I had some time to talk to them about academic stuff and what we were working on. But as well, just that social and emotional check in because now that they were home with the kids all the time, it was affecting them. So, I think that was helpful.

T9 shared how she included the parents in her remote lessons. She shared,

> But our kids are like hands on, so, it was a little bit different. So we were, you know, instructing the parents how to do things hands over hand, how to prompt

> them. We did a lot of different things like we would do in person, but with them, so it was interesting. It wasn't terrible, I have to say, once we got into it.

T9 shared another experience including the parents. She stated,

> We also gave the parents like assignments, like we'd say, "Tomorrow, show up with like six cups and six of these," like we would tell them what they'd have to have prepared and then they would work with us as well at home with manipulatives and different stuff like that.

Theme D: Teachers Needed Resources and Support From Their Administration to Teach Children Remotely

Administrative Support

Participants described their experiences with teaching remotely during the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in the 2019/2020 school year. They also described their perspectives of what they needed from administration to teach children remotely. Seven of the 10 participants interviewed believed there was a lack of support from their administration. T1 explained,

> I think that they just don't care. And they just want us to do it and good luck doing it. So again, I'm being truthful. I'm being honest. I don't think there was any support or still is any support above my principal.

T1 continued, explaining what she believed she needed from the administration. She explained,

> I think that they needed to more or less have us down as a team and just say or come on a Google meet and just say, "Hey, listen, this is what we want from you.

> This is what we need from you. What can we do to help you?" And at that point, I think we could have given them the opinions of what we needed.

T5 explained what she believed she needed from administration, sharing,

> I think we definitely needed support with certain students, like if you found a student wasn't really attending or logging in at all and doing any of the work, we needed that support because we didn't know really what to do with that particular student, like if they were okay, if they were not okay, if they were going to... obviously everybody that year couldn't... nobody was held back. So that wasn't the case, but that was definitely concerning, and we needed the support from them for that reason. That was pretty critical.

T6 stated,

> We could have been a little more prepared. I feel like we kind of had a warning it was coming. I know other districts gave their teachers like a day to pull some resources together to at least give the kids something to go home to. A little more time to prepare them to use those Chromebooks and get into our online resources. We didn't have as much training on our online resources.

T6 explained that in addition to time to prepare, she also needed the administration to stand behind her and help her support her students. She said,

> They wanted them to just get used to being on and have some fun, but the kids who were struggling began to fall and there wasn't enough support by administration to push for those kids to have more support and do more.… And

> then as much as I tried, I could push as hard as I could, but I really needed administration to stand behind me and say, "No. This kid needs to be on."

T8 described her frustrations with administration, saying, "If you tried to talk to admin, they really didn't have answers. But instead of saying that, they would be like, 'well, I don't know what to tell you,' so you felt unsupported." T8 also shared,

> We needed administration to sit down and say, "Hey, were in this together. We don't know. And what you're doing is great. We'll figure it out. We'll put the work up." You just needed them to be a little bit more compassionate and remember that they were once in the classroom as well.

Some of the participants believed there should have been more communication from administration. T1 explained,

> We need, you know, an email to go out to parents so that they know that these kids need to be on this page and this is what they need to do, instead of us going through 47 apps to try to get to parents. So, I think that they needed to be more involved with us. I think there were a lot of things that could have gone much smoother if we were all on the same page.… Communication with staff and administration and families could have been a lot better.

T2 described her administration as "vague," saying, "It was all just a little vague. I think more clear-cut guidelines and more support technology wise would have been certainly useful." Similarly, T5 explained,

> I think we definitely needed guidelines for what was expected because, again, it was so new. I think we needed ... sometimes it just felt like we needed answers to

> what's going to happen, and unfortunately, they couldn't really do that because it was kind of out of their hands. I think we needed need feedback as far as what we were doing. You know, what was okay? What was not okay?

Seven of the 10 participants that were interviewed explained that their administration was impacted by the pandemic as well and at the time, were trying their best. T1 was understanding that her administration was trying their best, sharing, “There was no help at first. You know, they tried their best as the months went on, but by then we pretty much got the hang of it to a certain extent.” T1 also shared, “So, I think they tried to do the best that they could with what they had. Our principal is absolutely wonderful. But the amount of stress and the amount of workload that she was given was just like us.” Similarly, T2 shared, “The support came at a later date and I probably still think that there were some mistakes made there, although, to their credit, they did try.” T5 shared how her administration tried to support the teachers, explaining,

> They tried to make it very even for everyone in terms of what was expected, because of they knew it was so new for us, so we couldn't, you know, if we knew how to do something or I had a teacher that I worked with that knew how to do something, we were encouraged not to really jump ahead of everybody else because we tried to keep everything kind of on a level playing field.

T6 also shared an example of how her administration tried to support them, saying, “I think the district did a good job trying to prepare us, like I said, by having our grade level teams kind of meet and kind of form the first few weeks for us.” T9 was understanding of the administration and shared, “They were really good. You know, because they were

learning just like we were, they didn't … you know what I mean? They didn't have any experience either."

Need for Professional Development and Resources

As participants discussed what support their administrators provided during the transition to remote learning and what they needed from their administrators to support them teaching remotely, many described a need for increased professional development and resources. T1 explained that there was never enough resource for the teachers transitioning to remote learning, saying, "Now we have, you know, less resources than we've ever had. I would say, as time went on, we got more and more resources, but there was just never enough and there still isn't enough." T2 explained that they needed resources and training to prepare for the transition to remote learning, saying,

> Technology was a huge issue. I think, for certain, myself and most of the people I was in close contact with at the time, ended up probably buying our own computers and probably some sort of training for basic things like how to work Zoom, how to set up a Zoom meeting where they know the kids are muted when they come in, or safety features. A training implemented would have been helpful, especially for those people who don't have technology confidence.

T4 also needed training, explaining, "Nobody knew this was going to happen, but it would have been helpful if there had been some type of training on this remote learning." T7 explained that teachers still need training so that they can prepare for similar situations in the future, saying,

> I think it's important that in the future, like starting now, teachers are given more professional development on this, on these types of topics, so that, you know, if this were to happen again, then we're a little bit more ahead of the game and we're understanding of what we can provide, that kids truly need from this type of platform.

Discrepant Cases

I did not find any evidence that would oppose the findings of this research study during the data analysis stage of my research. I included all of the data I collected during this research study so that other researchers have access to every gained perspective.

Summary

In Chapter 4, I addressed the data analysis process as well as the findings of my research study. This study was formed from two research questions and explored the perspectives of early childhood teachers regarding teaching remotely during a pandemic and what they need from school administration to teach children remotely. A total of 10 early childhood educators participated in semi-structured interviews and shared their perspectives for this basic qualitative study. During the data analysis process, I used Saldaña's (2015) *Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers* to examine the data and identify emerging patterns, categories, and themes. Four themes emerged from the data collected from the participants' perspectives (see Table 4).

Three of the emergent themes reflected the participants' perspectives of Research Question 1: What are early childhood teachers' perspectives of using remote learning during a pandemic? The first emergent theme reflecting Research Question 1 was: (a)

teachers were not prepared to teach remotely during the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. None of the participants had experience teaching children remotely before the onset of the pandemic and they all expressed that they felt unprepared and challenged by the transition to remote teaching in the 2019/2020 school year. Participants expressed challenges concerning the lack of technology, resources, and skills necessary for the transition as well as challenges pertaining to maintaining the engagement of students in an online setting. The second emergent theme reflecting RQ 1 was: (b) teachers were personally and professionally stressed by increased family and work demands. Participants shared that they experienced stress as the transition to remote teaching increased their work load and responsibilities, took longer to set up than in-person teaching, and increased pre-existing family struggles. The third emergent theme reflecting RQ 1 was: (c) teachers prioritized social emotional learning and experiences along with cognitive experiences while teaching remotely. Participants identified an increased need for social emotional education and experiences, along with cognitive experiences during the transition to remote teaching. Some participants found maintaining normalcy, connecting with students, and facilitating social experiences challenging in the remote setting, but all participants managed to create opportunities for social experiences and social emotional learning. This was a priority for many of the participants along with the facilitation of cognitive experiences meant to minimize the gaps in learning that occurred during the transition to remote learning.

A fourth emergent theme reflected the participants' perspectives of RQ 2: What do early childhood teachers need from school administration to teach children

remotely? The fourth emergent theme reflecting RQ 2 was: (d) teachers needed resources and support from their administration to teach children remotely. Participants identified a need for increased administrative support and communication as well as a continuous need for professional development and resources. Some participants explained that they understood that their administration was trying their best and was under as much pressure as they were, but they still needed their administration to stand behind them through this challenging time.

Chapter 5 includes an interpretation of the findings, limitations of the study, recommendations, and implications. Chapter 5 includes an in-depth analysis of each of the emergent themes and how they answer the research questions of the study. It also includes a detailed description of the limitations and any recommendations I have for managing those limitations in future studies. Finally, Chapter 5 includes a description of the implications and potential for social change as well as a final reflection of the study.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to explore the perspectives of early childhood teachers regarding teaching remotely during a pandemic and what they need from school administration to teach children remotely. I gathered data from individual, semistructured interviews via Zoom with 10 early childhood teachers with experience teaching remotely during the 2019/2020 school year due to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Participants shared their perspectives of teaching remotely during a pandemic and what they need from administration to teach children remotely. Through the analysis of data, the following themes emerged: (a) teachers were not prepared to teach remotely during the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, (b) teachers were personally and professionally stressed by increased family and work demands, (c) teachers prioritized social emotional learning and experiences along with cognitive experiences while teaching remotely, and (d) teachers needed resources and support from their administration to teach children remotely. Understanding the early childhood teachers' perspectives provides information on the needs of teachers for successfully teaching their students during the pandemic. Administrators can use the data gained from this study to make decisions that can improve the quality of teaching remotely during a pandemic based on the recommendations and experiences of experienced teachers. This study is significant in that it fills the gap in the literature on the perspectives of early childhood teachers teaching remotely during a pandemic and what they need from school administration to teach children remotely.

In Chapter 5, I include an interpretation of the findings with connections to the current literature and conceptual framework. I also discuss the limitations of the study, recommendations for future research, and study implications.

Interpretation of the Findings

I began the data collection process once I received approval to do so from the Walden University IRB. The interpretations and findings of this basic qualitative study were derived from individual, semistructured interviews with 10 early childhood educators, the literature review, and the conceptual framework. The following questions were used to address my study:

RQ1*:* What are early childhood teachers' perspectives of using remote learning during a pandemic?

RQ2: What do early childhood teachers need from school administration to teach children remotely?

During the interviews, I asked the participants five questions about their perspectives teaching remotely during a pandemic and what they need from administrators to teach children remotely. Four themes emerged from the responses received from these questions as well as any follow up questions asked during the individual, semistructured interviews. The findings of this study indicated that teachers were not prepared to teach remotely during the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, teachers were personally and professionally stressed by increased family and work demands, teachers prioritized social emotional learning and experiences along with

cognitive experiences while teaching remotely, and teachers needed resources and support from their administration to teach children remotely.

I evaluated the interpretation of these findings through current literature as well as my conceptual framework, Garrison's et al.'s (1999) community of inquiry model. The community of inquiry model was used to help understand how students' learning involves a relationship between socialization, teaching, and cognitive activity that is not restricted by the need for physical attendance (Cleveland-Innes et al., 2019); therefore, it can be extended to explore the development of remote learning as it occurs in an online setting (Garrison et al., 1999; Huang et al., 2019; Popescu & Badea, 2020).

Theme A: Teachers Were Not Prepared to Teach Remotely During the Onset of the COVID-19 Pandemic

The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic forced schools to transition to an emergency mode of education, impacting teachers and students all over the world (Bâcă, 2020; Ghounane, 2020; Iivari et al., 2020; Martinez & Broemmel, 2021). Each of the participants interviewed for this study expressed feeling unprepared to teach remotely during the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. The transition came with little to no warning (Martinez & Broemmel, 2021) and teachers did not know what to expect. Many shared feelings of uncertainty, explaining that they did not realize that the schools would be closed for the remainder of the year. T1 shared,

> So that March, in March that Friday, they told us just to take our stuff and that it would probably be anywhere from a day to a week that we would be out. And,

> you know, we didn't know if we were going to be teaching, if we weren't going to be teaching, and we definitely didn't know we were going to be online teaching.

Similarly, T4 shared, “We went out on March 13th thinking that it was 2 weeks and everybody would return, and we would go back to normal.”

Teachers were required to teach remotely with little to no training and a variety of new resources, technology, and modifications (McGlynn & Kelly, 2020; Summers 2020). Teachers needed to quickly learn how to teach virtually, how to utilize the new resources being introduced, and how to support and motivate their students and families (Bradley et al., 2020; Buschelman, 2020; Collins et al., 2020; Ghazali, 2020; Ghounane, 2020; Kaden, 2020; Pratama et al., 2020; Pryor et al., 2020; Summers, 2020). For many, this posed a challenge. One participant, T7, explained,

> You know, I’ve never worked with Google Classroom before. That was something pretty brand new to me. So, the process of kind of getting the kids started on Google Classroom, learning how to use it, and doing this all virtually was very tough. It was also difficult to transition from a lot of paperwork to then transitioning to online.

In addition to the challenges teachers faced teaching remotely due to the new resources being used in the remote setting, seven of the 10 participants discussed how difficult it was to motivate and engage their students and the families remotely. This was a common problem for remote teachers during the pandemic (Kaden, 2020; Mbiydzenyuy & Silungwe, 2020; Owolabi, 2020). T2 explained,

> Engagement. I think that was certainly one of the largest issues of all of the virtual … it's just hard to keep them tuned in and it's hard. You feel like you're a performer, you know, trying to be so animated that they stay tuned in, but you still lose them, unfortunately.

T6 explained, "It's very hard to fill the gaps educationally and without home support, it's really hard with these kids because it's them on the computer and they really need someone at home to be supportive."

Another challenge teachers faced teaching remotely during the COVID-19 pandemic was how the transition exacerbated preexisting digital inequalities (Bâcă, 2020; Beaunoyer et al., 2020; Kaden, 2020; Pryor et al., 2020). Teachers and students alike faced challenges finding adequate internet, devices, and the skills necessary to use these devices (Beaunoyer et al., 2020; Bishop-Monroe, 2020; Buschelman, 2020; Helding, 2020; Iivari et al., 2020; Martinez & Broemmel, 2021; Soto-Córdova, 2020). Even when families did have the devices and internet necessary for remote learning, they did not always have enough devices or strong enough wi-fi to support the increased need for these resources in the household (Beaunoyer et al., 2020; Romero-Ivanova, 2020). T3 stated,

> Not everyone had devices or access to the internet. Right? I think that was the hardest part. You had a family who was at home and at that time, you know, at the beginning of the pandemic, I mean so many of these families …You had a parent working who had to suddenly work from home, you had maybe 1, 2, 3 children who suddenly needed access to the internet, and most of these families didn't

> have wi-fi service that was strong enough to provide that kind of access to everyone in the family. So, I know that there were several families that were picking and choosing who was learning that day. And we had to be okay with that.

Similarly, T10 shared,

> The experience was extremely difficult. I work in a low-income community, so the kids getting devices was a struggle. The wi-fi was a struggle and, you know, having multiple children in the house and their families, you know, who needed a device. So, it was a struggle the whole time.

There were many schools that were able to provide devices for the students in need (Ghazali, 2020; Iivari et al., 2020), however, many of the participants explained that that took time to facilitate. T1 stated,

> The problem is most of our parents didn't have any internet, so, getting Chromebooks out, getting internet, all of that took months, which of course it's going to take months. I understand that. I mean, nobody knew that was going to happen.

Similarly, T2 explained,

> I'm a teacher in a very large, well, large in our state … We have 38,000 students in our district. They did try to get all the students' devices if needed, so that was one thing that was handled well. I, personally, was also given a student device to use.

The findings in this study indicated that teachers were not prepared to teach remotely during the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Participants shared their perspectives on how they felt unprepared due to the sudden transition from the traditional face-to-face method of teaching to the remote setting. They explained that they felt uncertain and faced challenges with the lack of training on the new resources, motivating and engaging the students and their families, and preexisting digital inequalities The findings supported the research found in Chapter 2 and the conceptual framework.

Theme B: Teachers Were Personally and Professionally Stressed by Increased Family and Work Demands

The transition to remote teaching was challenging for teachers and increased their anxiety, depression, and stress (Collins et al., 2020; Mbiydzenyuy & Silungwe, 2020; Romero-Ivanova et al., 2020). Teachers were struggling because their new role as virtual teachers in a remote setting required more energy and motivation than traditional face-to-face teaching, as teachers needed to adjust to new schedules and resources (Bâcă, 2020; Bradley et al., 2020; Pryor et al., 2020). Teachers were required to make these adaptations, which led to increased workloads (Kaden, 2020). T1 explained how her administration was unaware of how severely the teachers' workloads had increased, stating, "I just don't think they had any clue. Kind of what was going on in our homes, in our classroom. Like, I just don't think they realized how much work was actually put on you as a teacher." T8 described the pressure she felt from her administration as she tried to keep up with the increased workload, explaining,

> If you didn't get it done or you couldn't meet for three hours, you just felt like you were looked … it was frowned upon, like you were not doing the job. If you had other colleagues that, let's say, were spending hours working on all these things, but you couldn't, you felt the pressure.

One factor that impacted the increased workload and preparation time of teachers was the requirement to transition learning materials to virtual platforms (Kaden, 2020). T1 shared how the increased workload was stressful for her and her husband, sharing,

> I was up every night until about one o'clock in the morning. My husband looked at me one day and he's like, I feel like you're not even here anymore. And I wasn't because I was making these classrooms, these assignments, to differentiate each student, and it just took so much time.

Teachers were trying to create new lessons that were engaging, relevant, interactive, and provided students with choices in the virtual setting (Bâcă, 2020; Collins et al., 2020; Ghounane, 2020; Soto-Córdova, 2020). T6 explained an example of how she spent time preparing new lessons that were relevant, interactive, and provided students with choices. She shared,

> We would pull together 20 to 25 language arts activities we could do focused around the skills we would have been doing in brick and mortar with our books and find online resources and different things the kids could do around that subject. And then we would narrow them down with our grade level representative to the best five to 10 that we would put on that choice board for the kids to choose.

Teachers were also trying to create new lessons that were meaningful for the students despite the lack of hands-on experience traditional face-to-face learning provides (Cleveland-Innes et al., 2019; Collins et al., 2020; Slutsky et al., 2021; Suleiman & Danmuchikwali, 2020). T8 described her perspective on this challenge, stating, “Trying to come up with a curriculum when it’s a very hands-on program remotely was not fun.” T1 shared some examples of her lessons where she was able to facilitate hands-on experiences in the virtual setting and the amount of work that went into facilitating those experiences. She shared,

> I was able to do lessons on cooking, actually cooking with them, like making a peanut butter and jelly sandwich on a computer screen and then having them do it with me was pretty cool. Or even one day we made pizza, you know, like so things like that, were really cool. There was just a lot of challenges, a lot of work, like work that should have never happened and that kind of thing.

The remote setting also decreased the barriers of time; therefore, teachers were working on lesson preparations as well as parent communications beyond the typical school day, adding to the increased workload (Bâcă, 2020; Cleveland-Innes et al., 2019; Ghazali, 2020). T1 explained,

> I was taking phone calls at, you know, nine, 10, 11 o'clock at night from parents that were just getting off of work. I had parents that just ‘why aren't you on the computer, right this second’. So, everybody was very frustrated and didn't know what to do.

T9 also described how she worked beyond the typical school day, increasing her workload, stating, “Sometimes they would say to us, ‘Don’t get to … after hours, don’t talk to the parents,’ but like we were in their houses. It was almost impossible. Parents would call us.”

Another factor that impacted the increased stress and workload of teachers was the added responsibilities to provide families with support as the transition to remote learning increased their personal struggles. Families were suffering from unemployment, lack of food due to the loss of free school lunches, digital inequalities, and mental health issues (Collins et al., 2020; Helding, 2020; Kaden, 2020; Martinez & Broemmel, 2021; Mbiydzenyuy & Silungwe, 2020, Romero-Ivanova et al., 2020). Districts and teachers took on the added responsibility to care for these families and provide them with some of what they needed (Kaden, 2020; Martinez & Broemmel, 2021). T3 shared her experiences with this added responsibility, sharing,

> And now we’re worried about kids that are home all day. These are children, she had 2 grandchildren, who used to eat breakfast and lunch at school and now she has to get food for those kids, right? And where was that money coming from? And how is she doing the shopping? So, another thing we kind of did as a staff was, we kept track of that kind of situation. I mean, I went over and picked up food boxes at the school and delivered them to that house a couple of times.

Similarly, T4 shared,

> I had a mom contact me, return my phone call and say, ‘I don’t have any food now for my kids. I rely on my kids eating lunch at school,’ and my agency didn’t

> really have anything in place. They wanted me to make sure that they were okay, but they didn't tell me what to do if they weren't okay. At the time, I contacted my church because I know they have a food pantry.

T1 also shared her perspectives on the added responsibility and her frustration, sharing, "Everything was kind of put on us. 'Go through the teacher', you know, 'she'll figure it out. She'll tell you where to go. She'll tell you what to do.'"

The findings in this study indicated that teachers were personally and professionally stressed by increased family and work demands. Participants shared their perspectives on how they felt the increased workload, added preparation time, and recreation of lessons to fit the virtual setting were factors contributing to their stress. They also explained that they felt the decrease in time barriers of a typical face-to-face school day and the increase in responsibilities to support families experiencing struggles contributed to their stress. The findings supported the research found in Chapter 2 and the conceptual framework.

Theme C: Teachers Prioritized Social Emotional Learning and Experiences Along With Cognitive Experiences While Teaching Remotely

Teachers practiced compassion, flexibility, support, and understanding as they facilitated social-emotional experiences with their students in the remote setting (Collins et al., 2020; Helding, 2020; Summers, 2020). There was an increased focus on the social-emotional health and well-being of the students at this time (Kaden, 2020; Martinez & Broemmel, 2021). For many, the lack of face-to-face interactions and forced isolation caused loneliness and a lack of motivation, so teachers needed to facilitate experiences

that could provide socialization for the students (Bâcă, 2020; Collins et al., 2020; Ghazali, 2020; Helding, 2020; Kaden, 2020; Martinez & Broemmel, 2021; Soto-Córdova, 2020). Every participant shared their experiences facilitating social experiences and many of the participants explained that social-emotional learning was a priority for them. T3 shared,

> As far as the cognitive piece, it was secondary to the emotional piece. We were really being emphasized that we were to be making sure kids were okay, that they felt safe, that they weren't scared, that we were somehow still a world outside there that they could connect to.

According to the community of inquiry model, social presence is always necessary in learning and should consist of collaboration, communication, and making connections and relationships as a community of learners (Cleveland-Innes et al., 2019; Dempsey & Zhang, 2019; Garrison et al., 1999; Popescu & Badea, 2020). Some examples of the types of experiences that may decrease feelings of isolation in the remote setting include increased opportunities to ask questions, share, and have discussions (Cleveland-Innes et al., 2019; Dempsey & Zhang, 2019; Sidiropoulou & Mavroidis, 2019). T6 described some examples of how she facilitated social experiences, saying,

> The most I could do to get them to come, to socialize with each other, to have fun. And at that point, you know, I wanted to keep the academics going, but the social part was really important for me to keep them at home. And I knew their parents were gone a lot, so, not to just kind of stagnant lay and not have social interactions that I knew they really needed and would miss out on.

T7 also shared some examples of how she facilitated social experiences, saying

> So, every morning I had a group meeting with my students and it gave them an opportunity to get on and talk to each other and to talk about how things are going, how their day is different, things that they're doing now that they're home and get to see each other. And, you know, just…I would give a lot of time to just let them talk and let them have fun and joke around and have those situations where they could, you know, talk about things they would talk about in the classroom.

Every participant had experience with facilitating social experiences and shared examples of how they did so in the remote setting. For some, the experiences were more difficult than others, because in order to foster that sense of normalcy through socialization, students needed to participate and be willing to keep their cameras and microphones on (Arquilla & Guzdial, 2020; Collins et al., 2020; Romero-Ivanova et al., 2020; Won et al., 2020). T2 explained how she mitigated this issue, explaining, "I was the mean teacher that made them keep their videos on, their cameras on. I tried to foster, you know, responses, just getting everybody involved in the discussions and whatever we were doing."

In addition to social experiences, teachers prioritized cognitive experiences as well. When students and teachers participate in shared learning goals, discussions, activities, problem solving, and decision making, they can achieve higher-level thinking and learning (Beckett, 2019). Still, the school closures and transitions to remote learning created gaps in learning that will need to be closed (Buschelman, 2020; Pratama et al.,

2020; Seke, 2020). This may be due to schools requesting teachers transition into review mode for the remainder of the year. T5 explained that her district chose to focus on reviewing, sharing,

> It was meant to be a review of everything they've done so far that year. We weren't to teach anything new. So basically, we did, you know, phonics activity, phonemic activities. I worked on the fluency team: fluency activities, comprehension, vocabulary and we came up with so many activities per week and put this on a display choice board.

Teachers in the remote setting were given the option to teach both asynchronous and synchronous lessons (Ghounane, 2020; Pryor et al., 2020). The increase in remote learning during the 2019-2020 school year sparked an increase in available platforms meant to facilitate asynchronous and synchronous learning, such as Google Classroom and Google Meets, Blackboard, Zoom, and Microsoft Teams (Collins et al., 2020; Ghounane, 2020; Mahyoob, 2020; Mbiydzenyuy & Silungwe, 2020; McGlynn & Kelly, 2020; Szente, 2020). Participants explained that they facilitated cognitive experiences using a variety of asynchronous and synchronous lessons. T2 described her experience, explaining,

> We were required to do both synchronous and asynchronous learning where you would kind of teach a skill group. And I did try to cover all the subjects. Of course, we focus more on probably reading and math just because that's.... when you only have a short amount of time, that probably needs to be the focus, but then they would have their independent work. So, we try to model it like we do in

> the classroom where you do, you know, the introduction and I model and then there is independent practice as much as it's possible.

Teachers needed to mix online and offline assignments to give students a break from their screens (McGlynn & Kelly, 2020; Szente, 2020). Students who were required to sit in front of the computer for extended periods of time were more likely to struggle with their lessons (Bâcă, 2020; Beaunoyer et al., 2020; Bishop-Monroe, 2020). T2 shared how she mixed online and offline experiences and gave the students breaks, stating,

> We would have lots of brain breaks because, you know that they're seven years old, so they can only sit and stare at a screen for so long. So, we would do, you know The Silly Go Noodles videos or go run around your house and come back in two minutes kind of thing.

Typically, teachers view the goal of academics as cognitive in nature, however, social experiences support cognition when connections are made with other learners in the community (Garrison, 2017b; Garrison et al., 1999; Huang et al., 2019; Popescu & Badea, 2020; Swan et al., 2020). T2 shared how she fostered connections with her students, saying,

> We had a lot of discussions about what was going on in the world. We did some silly things like a virtual talent show and I invited them and sent out invitations for that. So, I tried to keep that classroom connection going, both through discussions and like shared experiences. And you know sometimes share your animal or share your siblings or a piece of artwork or, yeah, it was something

> different every week so that they enjoyed that and that was a nice way to kind of keep everybody connected.

T5 also shared how she fostered connections with her students, saying,

> I would say, join their classroom meets through Google Meet and we would have different activities where they could share a lot of like show and tell, a lot of like kind of Kahoot games or quiz games, trivia games, sharing different experiences... because they were at home. A lot of pets, a lot of show and tell with pets, and things like that…dress up days, theme days, different things like that to try and have the kids to relate to each other, even though it was through the screen.

Connections needed to be made with parents as well because the teachers and students relied on them for support (Pryor et al., 2020; Seke, 2020). Teachers were able to use the virtual platforms to form connections with parents and involve them in their child's education (Bâcă, 2020; Bishop-Monroe, 2020; Cleveland-Innes et al., 2019; Ghazali, 2020; Ghounane, 2020; McGlynn & Kelly, 2020; Nasir, 2020; Suleiman & Danmuchikwali, 2020; Szente, 2020). T9 shared,

> But our kids are like hands on, so, it was a little bit different. So we were, you know, instructing the parents how to do things hands over hand, how to prompt them. We did a lot of different things like we would do in person, but with them, so it was interesting. It wasn't terrible, I have to say, once we got into it.

T6 also attempted to foster connections with the parents of her students. She described a way in which she was able to do this virtually. She shared,

> I did Tuesday and Thursday Tea Time where parents could just tea and talk to me because the parents were going through a lot, which was reflective on the students. And I had some time to talk to them about academic stuff and what we were working on. But as well, just that social and emotional check in because now that they were home with the kids all the time, it was affecting them. So, I think that was helpful.

The findings in this study indicated that teachers prioritized social emotional learning and experiences along with cognitive experiences while teaching remotely. Participants shared their perspectives and examples of how they facilitated social experiences as well as cognitive experiences. They also explained that they felt making connections with the students and their families was essential for the promotion of social-emotional and academic learning in the remote setting. The findings supported the research found in Chapter 2 and the conceptual framework.

Theme D: Teachers Needed Resources and Support From Their Administration to Teach Children Remotely

Teachers need support from administration because when teachers are supported and valued, there is an opportunity for administrators make improvements and future developments that can positively impact the staff and students (Boylan et al., 2018; Brodeur & Ortmann, 2018; Özdemir et al., 2019). When teachers are not supported by their administration, they lose their desire to share their perspectives and their desire to be better teachers for their students and schools (Özdemir et al., 2019). T8 described her frustrations with the lack of administrative support, saying, “If you tried to talk to admin,

they really didn't have answers. But instead of saying that, they would be like, 'well, I don't know what to tell you,' so you felt unsupported." T1 explained that above her principal, there was no support. She stated,

> Participants described their experiences with teaching remotely during the onset of the COVID 19 pandemic in the 2019/2020 school year. They also described their perspectives of what they needed from administration to teach children remotely. Seven of the 10 participants interviewed believed there was a lack of support from their administration.

Teachers also needed their administrators' support with reaching students that struggled with the transition to the remote setting (Kaden, 2020; Martinez & Broemmel, 2021). Students were given the opportunity to practice self-autonomy by taking responsibility for their learning and motivation, but sometimes struggled to consistently engage and participate in the learning (Bâcă, 2020; Ghazali, 2020; Ghounane, 2020; Nasir, 2020; Suleiman & Danmuchikwali, 2020). T6 explained that she needed the administration to stand behind her to support her students in need. She stated,

> They wanted them to just get used to being on and have some fun, but the kids who were struggling began to fall and there wasn't enough support by administration to push for those kids to have more support and do more. … And then as much as I tried, I could push as hard as I could, but I really needed administration to stand behind me and say, 'No. This kid needs to be on.'

Students and teachers needed the administration to communicate with them as capable, respected members of the same team (Kotaman et al., 2018; Özdemir et al.,

2019). They needed open communication that was supportive, provided clear expectations, and updated, relevant information (Pryor et al., 2020; Suleiman & Danmuchikwali, 2020; Szente, 2020). Open communication between teachers and administrators can support personal and professional growth (Özdemir et al., 2019). Many participants shared that they felt they needed support, communication, and teamwork from their administration. T1 stated,

> I think that they needed to more or less have us down as a team and just say or come on a Google meet and just say, 'Hey, listen, this is what we want from you. This is what we need from you. What can we do to help you?' And at that point, I think we could have given them the opinions of what we needed.

Similarly, T8 stated,

> We needed administration to sit down and say, 'Hey, were in this together. We don't know. And what you're doing is great. We'll figure it out. We'll put the work up.' You just needed them to be a little bit more compassionate and remember that they were once in the classroom as well.

T5 mentioned the need for communication as well as clear guidelines. She stated,

> I think we definitely needed guidelines for what was expected because, again, it was so new. I think we needed ... sometimes it just felt like we needed answers to what's going to happen, and unfortunately, they couldn't really do that because it was kind of out of their hands. I think we needed need feedback as far as what we were doing. You know, what was okay? What was not okay?

Teachers also needed to quickly learn how to teach remotely and how to utilize the new resources that, over time, were being introduced to them (Bradley et al., 2020; Collins et al., 2020; Ghazali, 2020; Ghounane, 2020). Teachers needed ongoing professional development to successfully transition to the remote setting (Bradley et al., 2020; Buschelman, 2020; Collins et al., 2020; Kaden, 2020; Pratama et al., 2020; Pryor et al., 2020; Summers, 2020). Increased opportunities for professional development can influence teachers' perspectives and lead to professional growth (Clark, 2020; Özdemir et al., 2019). T1 explained that resources were provided to the teachers over time, however, there was never enough resource for the teachers transitioning to remote learning. She stated, "Now we have, you know, less resources than we've ever had. I would say, as time went on, we got more and more resources, but there was just never enough and there still isn't enough." T2 explained that they needed resources and training to prepare for the transition to remote learning, saying,

> Technology was a huge issue. I think, for certain, myself and most of the people I was in close contact with at the time, ended up probably buying our own computers and probably some sort of training for basic things like how to work Zoom, how to set up a Zoom meeting where they know the kids are muted when they come in, or safety features. A training implemented would have been helpful, especially for those people who don't have technology confidence.

The findings in this study indicated that teachers needed resources and support from their administration to teach children remotely. Participants shared their perspectives on how they felt their voices needed to be heard, they needed support with

struggling students, and they needed to feel more like a member of a team. They explained that they needed administration to provide more resources and training to use those resources to be more prepared for remote teaching. The findings supported the research found in Chapter 2 and the conceptual framework.

Limitations of the Study

As with any study, there were limitations to consider and address in this study. The limitations of this study included participant recruitment, sample size, and personal bias.

Recruiting participants was a limitation for this study due to the current expectations for social distancing due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the current workload and stress of teachers as they continue to navigate teaching face-to-face, virtually, and with a hybrid model during the COVID-19 pandemic. I was able to address this limitation by providing teachers with an open and flexible schedule for meeting to conduct the interview. I was also able to address this limitation with the use of Zoom, a virtual tool that aids in remote, face-to-face interactions.

Another limitation of this study was the sample size. I interviewed 10 early childhood educators. This number of participants only provides a small representation of early childhood educators' perspectives on teaching remotely during a pandemic and what they need from administration to teach children remotely, however, the number of participants did meet data saturation for this study. The use of the Walden University Participant Pool, early childhood teachers' social media groups, and snowball sampling helped address this limitation. More teachers may have participated, but there were

several participants who responded to my invitation after the deadline. I was able to address this limitation by ensuring my study is transferable by providing rich descriptions of the data collection and analysis processes. This allows for the study to be replicated, reaching a greater number of early childhood teachers and gaining more perspective on their experiences teaching remotely during a pandemic and what they need from administration to teach children remotely.

A third limitation of my study was my personal bias. I am a teacher that has experienced teaching remotely during the COVID-19 pandemic. Acknowledging and avoiding personal bias that could influence the study was a challenge, however, the use of a reflective journal that I recorded in as I moved through the process helped address this. I was able to monitor my personal thoughts and reactions and focus solely on the data being collected from each participant.

Recommendations

The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to explore the perspectives of early childhood teachers regarding teaching remotely during a pandemic and what they need from school administration to teach children remotely. Participants in this study identified that teachers were not prepared to teach remotely during the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, teachers were personally and professionally stressed by increased family and work demands, teachers prioritized social emotional learning and experiences along with cognitive experiences while teaching remotely, and teachers needed resources and support from their administration to teach children remotely. Participants believed they did not have the technology, training, or skills to feel adequately prepared to

transition to remote teaching during such challenging and uncertain times. Participants believed that the increased workload, teacher responsibilities and expectations, and time it took to set up this new platform of learning, in addition to their personal, family struggles, increased stress levels both at home and in the work place. Participants believed the transition to remote learning increased the necessity and difficulty of making connections with students and their families, facilitating social experiences, and implementing social emotional lessons along with cognitive lessons meant to increase skills and minimize the gaps in learning caused by the transition. Participants also believed that there was an increased need for professional development, resources, and support from their administration to successfully navigate the new, remote teaching platform. The study findings support the gaps in research on early childhood teachers being required to teach young children remotely due to the worldwide pandemic, COVID-19, and what they need from their administrators to assist them as they teach remotely during this new and unique situation. The following are my recommendations for further research.

I recommend the completion of a follow up study that includes more participants from more schools across the United States. The second recommendation is to complete a follow up study, expanding the participant sample beyond early childhood teachers. The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic impacted the education of students of all ages. Greater insight can be gained from the perspectives and experiences of teachers who teach grade levels beyond early childhood education. My last recommendation is to continue studying teachers' perspectives on teaching remotely during a pandemic and what they need from

school administration with a focus on the subsequent years. The benefit of this would be an increased understanding of how teachers' perspectives, experiences, and needs from administration shifted as the impacts of the pandemic progressed. Continuing to study teachers' perspectives on teaching remotely during a pandemic and what they need from school administration can also support planning for school closures due to reasons other than the COVID-19 pandemic, such as power outages, inclement weather, natural disasters, evacuations, and high absences due to illness.

Implications

A goal of this study was to explore the perspectives of early childhood teachers regarding teaching remotely during a pandemic and what they need from school administration to teach children remotely. Participants in this study expressed concerns with feeling unprepared for the transition to remote teaching as well as concerns with feeling increased stress in their personal and professional lives due to the increased workload, challenges, and increased family struggles. Participants also expressed a need for prioritizing the focus on social emotional experiences along with cognitive experiences in the remote environment to maintain a connection with the students and their families, maintain a sense of normalcy, and minimize any gaps in learning occurring during the 2019/2020 school year. Finally, participants expressed a need for support, professional development, and resources from their administration to support them throughout the transition.

The results of this study have implications for early childhood administrators. This study may contribute to positive social change by providing early childhood

administrators with the insight needed to make decisions that may improve the quality of teaching and learning in remote settings during a pandemic based on the recommendations and experiences of experienced early childhood teachers. This would prompt administrators to provide greater support and adjust protocols, as necessary. This study may also provide support to early childhood teachers as they attempt to navigate this new educational environment, by providing information regarding the needs of experienced teachers to successfully teach their students during the pandemic. This study may also impact the students who are participating in varying forms of remote learning, as the administrators are more informed and capable of providing support to the teachers and the teachers are receiving the supports needed to successfully teach the students in remote settings.

Conclusion

The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to explore the perspectives of early childhood teachers regarding teaching remotely during a pandemic and what they need from school administration to teach children remotely. Although there is a wealth of information on integrating technology in the classroom, digital inequalities, and cultural shifts students may face, there is a gap in research on early childhood teachers being required to teach young children remotely due to the worldwide pandemic, COVID-19, and what they need from their administrators to assist them as they teach remotely during this new and unique situation (see Iivari et al., 2020). The results of this study helped fill that gap in the literature. I interviewed 10 early childhood teachers and explored their

perspectives on teaching remotely during a pandemic and what they need from administration to teach children remotely.

Four themes emerged from the data, including (a) teachers were not prepared to teach remotely during the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, (b) teachers were personally and professionally stressed by increased family and work demands, (c) teachers prioritized social emotional learning and experiences along with cognitive experiences while teaching remotely, and (d) teachers needed resources and support from their administration to teach children remotely. The findings of this study focused on the gap in research by contributing to an increased understanding of early childhood teachers being required to teach young children remotely due to the worldwide pandemic, COVID-19, and what they need from their administrators to assist them as they teach remotely during this new and unique situation.

The results of this study lead to deeper knowledge of the experiences of early childhood teachers regarding teaching remotely during a pandemic and what they need from school administration to teach children remotely. The data and results of this study may provide early childhood administrators with the insight needed to make decisions that may improve the quality of teaching and learning in remote settings during a pandemic or other circumstance based on the recommendations and experiences of experienced early childhood teachers.

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Appendix A: Interview Questions

1. How many years of teaching experience did you have prior to the 2019/2020 school year?
2. What grades did you teach during the 2019/2020 school year?
3. How old were you during the 2019/2020 school year?
4. How would you describe your experience teaching remotely during the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in the 2019-2020 school year?

   Follow up:

   a. How did you recreate social experiences in the remote setting? Can you give some specific examples?
   b. How did you facilitate cognitive experiences in the remote setting? Can you give some specific examples?
5. What were your experiences with teaching remotely before the pandemic?
6. What support did your administration provide as you transitioned to remote teaching during the pandemic?
7. What support do you believe teachers needed from administration to provide for the transition?
8. What additional experiences or thoughts can you share pertaining to teaching remotely during the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in the 2019-2020 school year?

Possible follow up prompts that I will keep visible as I interview each participant:

What did you mean by…?

Tell me more about…

You mentioned…

Tell me more…

Can you expand more on …?

Appendix B: Interview Protocol

Participant's Name: _____

Date: _____ Time: _____

School: _____ Grade level: _____

Introduction: Hi. My name is Destiny Moretto. Thank you so much for participating in my study. The purpose of this interview is to talk about your experiences teaching remotely due to the COVID-19 pandemic during the 2019-2020 school year. This interview should take approximately 40-60 minutes. As you read in the signed participation and consent form, I will not identify you in my documents and no one will be able to identify you with your answers. You can choose to stop this interview at any time. I also need to let you know that this interview will be recorded for transcription purposes.

Do you have any questions?

Are you ready to begin?

Interview Questions:

Watch for non-verbal queues

Paraphrase as needed

Ask follow-up probing questions to get more in depth

Record and save audio of the interview

1. How many years of teaching experience did you have prior to the 2019/2020 school year?
2. What grades did you teach during the 2019/2020 school year?

3. How old were you during the 2019/2020 school year?
4. How would you describe your experience teaching remotely during the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in the 2019-2020 school year?

    Follow up:

    a. How did you recreate social experiences in the remote setting? Can you give some specific examples?

    b. How did you facilitate cognitive experiences in the remote setting? Can you give some specific examples?
5. What were your experiences with teaching remotely before the pandemic?
6. What support did your administration provide as you transitioned to remote teaching during the pandemic?
7. What support do you believe teachers needed from administration to provide for the transition?
8. What additional experiences or thoughts can you share pertaining to teaching remotely during the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in the 2019-2020 school year?

Possible follow up prompts that I will keep visible as I interview each participant:

- What did you mean by…?
- Tell me more about…
- You mentioned…
- Tell me more…
- Can you expand more on …?

Conclusion: Thank you for your answers and for taking the time to speak with me. I will have the audio I recorded transcribed and will create a two-page summary of the findings. I will share that document with you should you wish to member check it for accuracy or to make any adjustments before I analyze it. I will also share the results of my study with you once the study is completed.

Do you have any questions?

My email is [redacted] if you think of any questions after the interview.

Thank you again for your time. Goodbye.