

CHAPTER III METHODOLOGY

Following the theoretical grounding and context provided in Chapter 2 regarding the continued importance of distance education, about curricular requirements for English language instruction in Indonesia, and about the relevance of teaching presence as a significant component of the Community of Inquiry framework, chapter outlines the methodology used in a study that aimed to understand how secondary school EFL teachers were able to pivot and adjust their practices during the COVID-19 pandemic via teaching presence interventions. Using Narrative inquiry as the methodology of the study, the study aims to find not just the strategies, but also the experiences behind and the contextual struggles that led to the strategies to be enacted, which closely mirrors the threefold purpose of the study, looking at Indonesian teachers' design and organization of courses, facilitation of discourse, and teaching presence in virtual learning environments.

3.1 Research Design

The investigation was a qualitative research study to disclose teaching presence strategies employed by Indonesian EFL teachers in remote teaching and learning during the coronavirus outbreak. Remote instruction was a global phenomenon that teachers had experienced as a consequence of the pandemic. They had struggled to experiment with the best strategies to bring “presence” into their remote classroom. Creswell (2014) recommends a qualitative study design when a phenomenon needs to be understood. Creswell's Qualitative research is more holistic in its approach in that qualitative researchers place themselves in the research context, usually face-to-face with participants, gather a variety of sorts of data rather than a single type, and reflect on the different views they discover (Creswell & Poth, 2023). The research can provide a more complete view of the outcomes than quantitative research. The research design is described in the following sections, which are framed by the research questions.

Qualitative research is a research approach that focuses on exploring and understanding individuals' ideas, attitudes, behaviors, and experiences through the collection and analysis of non-numeric data (Creswell & Poth, 2017). It is often used to investigate complex phenomena or to gain a deep understanding of individuals' perspectives and the meaning they attach to their experiences (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018; Alam, 2023; Ashley Crossman, 2021). Qualitative research can include various methods (e.g., ethnography, grounded theory, discourse analysis, interpretative phenomenological analysis (Creswell & Creswell, 2017) that provide rich and in-depth information about human behavior and social dynamics within context.

According to Agazu et al (2022), qualitative research is grounded in observed data that provide insights into the efforts of EFL teachers in the virtual learning environment to design, organize, and engage with online courses, thus the qualitative approach applied in this dissertation was appropriate. Through the utilization of narrative inquiry as a research approach, I could gather and scrutinize the accounts of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) educators, thereby investigating their perceptions and interpretations of their own experiences (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Narrative inquiry is a qualitative research approach that centers on the firsthand accounts of individuals as they articulate their own experiences (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Riessman (2008) posits that individuals derive meaning from their experiences by engaging in the act of storytelling.

Qualitative research has many advantages such as obtaining in-depth and comprehensive data (Maxwell, 2013), capturing the nuanced and multifaceted nature of human phenomena (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018), and offering flexibility and creative space in data collection and analysis (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). Several drawbacks of this approach include its potential for wasting a significant amount of time, its subjective nature as shown by Silverman (2016), its difficulty in being generalized as noted by Maxwell (2013), and its susceptibility to biases as highlighted by Creswell and Poth (2023). Hence, as mentioned by Riessman (2008),

as a qualitative researcher, it is imperative to acknowledge and tackle the potential constraints and difficulties associated with the selected methodology in the dissertation.

Creswell (2014) suggests that qualitative research questions emerge from inadequacies of current theory and research. To address research questions in teaching presence strategies a comprehensive literature review is conducted in Chapter 2. It was evident that instructional strategies to bring teaching presence into remote teaching and learning were almost unheard of. Moreover, in this study, the teaching presence of the Community of Inquiry (COI) (Garrison, 2011) model provided a conceptual framework for this study. Teachers endeavored to create meaningful learning experiences through the development of cognitive, social, and teaching presences. As teaching presence, which is the design, facilitation, and direction of cognitive and social processes for the purpose of realizing personally meaningful and educationally worthwhile learning outcomes, is the binding element of the other two presences and serves as the main predictor for the success of remote teaching and learning (Anderson et al. ,2019), will be the focus of the study. Therefore, this study proposes the following research questions:

1. How did EFL teachers in secondary schools design and organize their online course(s)?
2. How did EFL teachers in secondary schools facilitate discourse among course participants?
3. How did EFL teachers in secondary schools engage in direct instruction to course participants?

Narrative Inquiry

Now, a qualitative research methodology, narrative inquiry consists of the edgy and interpretive collection of personal narratives to discover one way in which individuals interpret and make sense of their own lives. This approach is based on the fact that people are narrative creatures who live their lives filled with

stories as individuals and as a collective (Barkhuizen et al., 2024; Dikilitas & Reynolds, 2022; Clandinin & Hsu, 2017). Narrative inquiry involves gathering stories through interviews, observation, or written text and then analyzing those stories for themes and patterns that illuminate human experience.

This advantage of narrative inquiry lies specifically in the fact that no numerical data has the same potential as narrative inquiry to encompass the complexity and depth of individual experiences, providing a more textured understanding of human engagement than that possible through quantitative data (Etikan & Bala, 2017). This method helps researchers understand the meaning participants attribute to their experiences, thus gaining insights into their perspectives and motivations.

However, narrative inquiry also has limitations. Because the method relies on personal stories, this might raise questions about the generalizability of its findings. Finally, narrative analysis is a subjective approach, which means that the researcher's perspective plays an important role in interpreting the data and may be subject to bias (Heinonen & Spearman, 2020). Moreover, narratives are clouded by memory and personal bias, which can affect the accuracy and reliability of the information.

Nevertheless, narrative inquiry is a valuable methodology within qualitative research that is particularly suitable for studies that aim to understand complex social phenomena, human experiences and the process of making meaning out of everyday life (Montero, 2019). This modality provides a means by which researchers can access what individuals ascribe meaning to their lived experience and how they frame sensemaking regarding their experience derived from within social contexts and the testimonials of individual narratives.

Narrative inquiry was an appropriate method to explore the "Presence Strategies in Virtual Learning Environments" used by Indonesian EFL teachers. This approach fits the exploratory and descriptive nature of the research well, as it enables a thorough exploration of individual and collective experiences. The

context-sensitive and evolving practices of educators in virtual learning environments also make narrative inquiry a useful approach. This approach focuses on individual stories or reflections of what the teachers have done or how they adapted to the sudden shift to online teaching environments (Dikilitas & Reynolds, 2022; Clandinin & Husu, 2017).

Researchers often view narrative inquiry as similar to a case study. This can be understood since Barkhuizen, Benson, & Chik (2024), who discussed the methodologies of narrative inquiry and case studies in qualitative research, emphasized that both approaches are centered on exploring individual experiences or cases to gain deeper insights into specific phenomena. However, there are certain differences between these two techniques. According to Creswell & Poth (2016), narrative inquiry seeks to understand how humans make sense of their experiences through the collection and analysis of their stories or narratives. (Case study investigations are more focused on a single case or a small number of cases, including the context and perspectives of actors. Additionally, narrative inquiry relies heavily on qualitative data sources such as interviews, stories, and observation. In contrast, case study methodology preserves the ability to bring together quantitative and qualitative data, including surveys, measurements, interviews, and documents. Additionally, narrative inquiry is often used to study the formation of identity, personal meaning, and human agency. On the other hand, a typical case study is used to study complex social phenomena like poverty, health, education, and social change.

Narrative inquiry, a form of qualitative approach, can be conducted to explore how Indonesian EFL (English as a Foreign Language) teachers involved in emergency distance teaching and learning strategies at the time of research questions as specified in the topic outline. According to Dikilitas and Reynolds (2022), narrative inquiry is well-suited for exploring people's experiences, perspectives, and sense-making processes. A more refined understanding of these issues also makes this framework particularly relevant for understanding how

teachers design and organize their online and hybrid courses, how they engage students in discussions, and how they provide direct instruction in the virtual or remote learning context during the pandemic.

To answer the first research question directly, the paper utilizes narrative inquiry to explore the decision-making processes, challenges and innovative strategies employed by educators designed and organized their online courses. Such a methodology embeds the complexity and nuance of course design that may be lost in purely quantitative techniques. The focus on personal narratives yields a richer, more multifaceted picture of educators' approaches and the motivations behind the choices they make when it comes to teaching online (Dyakovska, 2015).

For the second research question, narrative inquiry provides a comprehensive method for exploring interaction and communicative practices that offer potential for articulations of meaning and dialogue among members of the course. Educators' narratives and reflections reveal the often understated strategies used to engage students, regulate conversations, and establish safe and collaborative online learning spaces (Riessman, 2008). This approach provides insight into the ways in which teachers work to maintain and improve communication among them within both virtual learning environments.

With respect to the third research question, narrative inquiry can clarify pedagogical approaches and instructional methods used in the virtual environment, and, more specifically, in reference to direct instruction. Personal narratives from teachers can reveal how they modify their teaching styles to a digital format, how they deliver educational content, and what their particular set of struggles is in keeping students engaged in learning remotely. It also enables to study of how educators adjust their practice to create a variety of online learning experiences (Polkinghorne, 2010).

Thus, narrative inquiry is serving suit as a qualitative research strategy, with a very unique focus on experiences in emergency remote education. This allows for an in-depth understanding of how English as a Foreign Language (EFL)

instructors justified their plans in response to the challenges that arose with the COVID-19 pandemic. Through Personal Narratives, it adds a rich layer of detail regarding the strategies and methods teachers used to adapt to a constantly evolving educational landscape and to meet the needs of students during an unprecedented crisis.

3.2 Research Participants

The study took place in nine state and private secondary schools in six cities in West Java Province, Indonesia. The participants were selected purposively with specific criteria, like: first of all, the teachers have at least 10 years of teaching experience and exclusively practiced remote instruction, making use of synchronous and asynchronous technology-mediated learning platforms during the pandemic. With these criteria, these teachers were assumed to be very familiar with the learning strategies in conventional face-to-face and remote instruction. In addition, by experiencing full distance learning during the pandemic (23 months), teachers would boldly remember how they taught so that they could share stories in detail. Likewise, they could tell the researcher how they learned and how teachers taught in detail as well. The participants were English teachers who had a lot of experience in using the learning platform(s) or Learning Management System (LMS), so they could share how they design instructional activities, facilitate students' learning, and provide direct instruction when the teaching and learning process was set to be asynchronous. And last but not least is that the teachers were voluntarily willing to participate in the research, so they would have a commitment to participate in the whole journey of the research.

Purposive criterion sampling was employed in order to interview teachers who most likely to have relevant and rich sources of information, but also meet certain criteria. This type of sampling is widely used in qualitative research for the identification and selection of information-rich cases related to the phenomenon of interest (Ahmad & Wilkins, 2024).

As West Java is the most populated province in Indonesia, with cities and regencies with reliable internet connectivity, looking for schools whose teachers consistently teach remotely by using edu-platforms is not difficult. Besides, the university where the researcher works has a good partnership with the schools throughout the province, so selecting research participants was not a problem. The English teachers meeting the criteria were invited to voluntarily participate in the research. The teachers who positively responded to the invitation were then given consent. The consent informed the teachers why they were singled out to be the participants, the time commitment, the expected benefits, the potential risks, and confidentiality. All selected participants would have the opportunity to learn the results of the research afterward. Due to expense and time, qualitative researchers often use fewer participants than quantitative researchers (Flick, 2021). In this research, 10 teachers were selected as participants.

A letter of willingness to be a participant and a consent form provided an explanation of the purpose and research methods used. Each prospective participant obtained an unsigned consent form and the recruitment invitation. Candidate's verbal willingness and consent to voluntarily participate in this research were also video-recorded and transcribed. Written transcription then provided further documentation of the participants' agreement. Participants were expressly told that their participation was entirely voluntary and that there would be no consequences if they chose to withdraw at any moment. To preserve confidentiality, each participant was given a pseudonym that was used continuously throughout the process. See table 3.1 for participant demography.

Table 3 1Participant Demography

No	Participants Pseudonyms	Gender	Teaching Experience (years)	Education
1	Melani	Female	23	Bachelor in English Education
2	Aline	Female	10	Bachelor in English Education
3	Marsya	Female	10	Bachelor in English Education
4	Mike	Male	26	Bachelor in English Education
5	Sandro	Male	25	Bachelor in English Education, Master in Management
6	Edward	Male	26	Bachelor in English Education
7	Wulan	Female	21	Bachelor in English Education, Master in English Education
8	Monica	Female	29	Master in English Education
9	Biben	Male	27	Bachelor in English Education

After obtaining participant approval, the data collection, storage, and analysis stages begin to roll out. This procedure can be explained in more detail as follows.

1. Participants who had expressed a willingness to participate were contacted again to make an appointment for Zoom-mediated virtual interviews with time adjusted to their desired free time. Zoom links with the ID and password were provided to the participants as soon as the time agreement has been met. If the participant did not show sufficient interest, resigned, or did not respond, eligible research participants will be contacted to arrange Zoom meeting to begin the interview phase.
2. Three semi-structured interviews were conducted with each participant to collect data. The time invested for each interview was set to last for 90 minutes. Three interviews were required because narrative inquiry research required (a) time to develop a collaborative relationship with participants, (b) time for participants to go in-depth as they told their stories of their lived

experiences with thick descriptions, and (c) time between interviews to allow participants to reflect and prepare them for additional storytelling at subsequent interviews. The next sections go into greater detail on data collecting and analysis.

Overview of Research Participants

In narrative inquiry, an elaboration of the research participants is needed to provide contextual depth and to illustrate ethical transparency, as it helps readers to acquire a sense of how participants' identities, experiences and social and cultural realities inform the narratives under investigation. The latter contributes to the greater interpretive richness of the inquiry and allows for the co-construction of meaning between researcher and participant: this is particularly important in relation to relational ethics and narrative coherence (Colla & Kurtz, 2024; Pervin & Mokhtar, 2023). In addition, such overviews provide a means of dealing with power relations and positionality by ensuring participants' voices are genuinely projected and positioned within the general social and institutional context that shapes their experiences (Colla & Kurtz, 2024; Pervin & Mokhtar, 2023). The research participants' overview is detailed below.

The "Overview of Participants" offers an overview of the demographic and professional background characteristics of the EFL teachers who participated in this study, providing context to the findings and a better understanding of the participant diversity and expertise. The participants of the study were recruited consisting of 10 experienced English teachers coming from the secondary schools in Indonesia. These ranged from teachers new to the profession to those with more than 20 years under their belt. Participants hold Bachelor of English Education degrees or English Studies degrees, some of whom have pursued Master's level studies.

The participants taught at both public and private schools in Indonesia in urban and rural settings, ensuring a variety of schools were represented. Indeed,

this diversity of school settings offers a useful way to sample a view of a relatively broad range of experiences, needs and approaches around remote teaching, given the different configurations of the classrooms. In the data collection phase, one participant had to drop out of the study for unforeseen personal circumstances. Therefore, nine participants were actively involved and provided a wealth of data through interviews, reflective teacher journals, and participation in focus group discussions until the end of the research. This section provides an overview of the background of each participant in terms of their years of teaching experience, their level of technological proficiency, and the specific perspectives they offered to the study. All participant names were substituted with pseudonyms in order to protect confidentiality and ensure ethical principles of conducting research. The description of the research participants is suggested in alphabetical order to give the readers a sense of the variety of profiles that shaped the conclusions of the study.

1. Aline

Aline is an English teacher in her early thirties who has taught for 11 years. She was born in Bandung, Indonesia and graduated from the Indonesia University of Education in 2013. Aline knew she wanted to make a difference in the lives of the students she would teach from the day she graduated. She first taught at a private high school in Bandung, and rapidly made a name for herself as a passionate and resourceful teacher. Even when opportunities to become a civil servant were few and far between, Aline appreciated her profession and the work she got to be a part of despite the struggles she faced early in life.

Her path shifted dramatically during the COVID-19 pandemic when she was thrust into the challenges of emergency remote learning. Like many educators around the world, Aline was initially caught off guard, but quickly acclimated by adopting new technologies and pedagogies. Driven by the necessity to deliver the best of education as the pandemic challenged the status quo, she utilized and learnt various online platforms, like Google Classroom and Google Sites. With little

access to resources, she took it upon herself to find classes and training/tutorials to brush up on her own skills and ensure that her students were as prepared as possible for Carrabas given the information they had.

Aline faced challenges in her experience of the pandemic as well. She also had to manage the anxiety and uncertainty around what the shift to full online learning would mean, but in her love for her students never faltered. She creatively engaged her students with virtual meetings, quizzes and interactive learning activities, always working to keep them interested, participating. Her method of teaching was very organized and well-thought out because she genuinely cared about her students academic performance and ever being.

Aline also hurried to mention that the role of external support in the learning process through parents was just as important. She kept in close contact with parents and homeroom teachers, knowing that they played a key role in keeping students engaged and motivated. Aline was the perfect teacher for one of the most unprecedented and difficult times in recent history, as her ability to quickly adapt to a new style of teaching, along with her compassion and determination, helped Aline be the best educator ever.

I am now a teacher in a public high school in a small town in West Bandung Regency. Working as a teacher is challenging; however, this was the perfect challenge because now I am here inspiring my students with my resilience and innovative teaching. As a proud Christian, she looks back to her journey from the past few years with pride in her heart, for she has not only battled through as a human and a professional but has given her students a value based and a nourishing experience. Aline's story is one of adaptation, resilience, and a profound commitment to her students' education.

2. Biben

A 50-something, long-serving teacher for two decades at state senior high schools in Cirebon, West Java, Biben is passionate about his work. As a teacher born in the late 1960s, he began teaching in 1997 and has seen first-hand a dramatic

evolution in education methods. Having trained as a traditional teacher, Biben has been forced to keep up with a whirlwind of digital transformation that has hit education in particular over the last couple of years as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The world was moving online in a period of technology that was so lesser than today, and so Biben faced great difficulties. As part of the so-called “90s generation,” he recognized that it was necessary to learn from younger coworkers who were more tech-savvy. This adaptability was key when schools across Indonesia were forced to close due to the pandemic and educators had to be nimble to convert to online teaching.

Although relatively unprepared to seize the unexpected opportunity, Biben showed aptitude, resourcefulness, and strong duty. He's incorporating more digital tools — like WhatsApp, so he can still communicate with his students or Google Classroom, where students can post to a shared discussion board — to continue the learning process, just in a more limited form. It is also Biben's ability to adapt and learn — from new technology and tools to new ways of doing business — that were crucial in the COVID-19 fight.

Biben is committed to his students' success, especially those taking UTBK, the test for university entrance in Indonesia. He focusing on those and he also tries to help his students to be a critical thinker and a literate in English so that they will be able to get along with others if they are going to provide further human resources. He employs best practice strategies to keep most students engaged, but he also understands the struggles lower-achieving students face, and tries to make the learning process as fun, interesting and accessible as possible.

Biben has made it his goal to ensure that all his students are receiving a high-quality education, regardless of their background, throughout his career. The pandemic challenged his skill set and forced him to innovate in ways he never expected. But despite everything the upheaval in the classroom has been "a great experience," as Biben now reflects on the progress his students have made, saying

that this recent phase of his teaching career now serves as a testament to his tenacity and commitment to his students.

3. Edward

Edward is a 52-year-old male Indonesian, born and raised in Central Java and Bandung, West Java, where he studied for his tertiary education. Edward holds a Bachelor's Degree in Education from the Institute for Teacher Training and Pedagogy in Bandung; he graduated in 1996. Edward's interest in pedagogy pushed him towards a teaching career, which began as a private junior high school English teacher in Bandung in 1998. After a few teaching transitions, he eventually settled in Subang, West Java, where he has spent more than two decades teaching. Edward's 22-year pedagogical experience in Subang reflects his commitment to educating many high school students. The veteran teacher offers essential pedagogical insights, especially regarding the new form of learning competition following the 2020 Covid-19 pandemic repercussions. Like any teacher around the world, Edward faced unprecedented challenges soon as the government declared an immediate shift to Emergency Remote Learning. Edward's previous experience did not involve the use of online teaching tools, including the likes of zoom. Despite the learning constraints, conflict and administrative tasks limitations, Edward stepped up to continue the educational process from auto offline. Edward's struggle was a clear reflection of the broader challenges impacting educators around the world.

Edward's main concern at that time, with the pandemic, was the future of his students. He expressed concern about the possibility of a "lost generation," as education was disrupted. He, however, stayed hopeful and got creative to engage his students despite the distance learning challenges. A big issue Edward faced was that many of his students did not have gadgets, and entire families were sharing one device. Worse, internet coverage was patchy at the time and Edward struggled to keep up, yet he pushed on, helping his school fix the infrastructure and bandwidth necessary for communication.

Another key challenge that Edward had to solve during ERL was engagement. Finding ways to keep students engaged with their education, despite being physically distanced from one another, took ingenuity. Especially for middle

school students, he stressed, parental involvement is crucial, and he also communicated with parents as best as he could and made sure that students were showing up to lessons and doing the work. Edward also worked to build individual and group work, facilitating peer-to-peer interaction to the extent possible by using very simple tools like WhatsApp.

Looking back at his practice during the pandemic, Edward believes it was a very steep learning curve for both teachers and students. But by the new semester in July, he and his colleagues had become more accustomed to the technology and were able to hold video conferences and deliver lessons more smoothly. Through the circumstances, Edward is determined to help his students succeed and regularly makes necessary adjustments within the profession.

Edward's experience embodies the determination and commitment that have characterized the teaching profession—that despite the challenges of these times, educators are dedicated to keeping the learning process going. His practice of adaptability, communicating with parents, and being present on technology highlights his passion for his profession and his faith in the power of education.

4. Marsya

Marsya is a dedicated educator in her early 30s, originally from Bandung, Indonesia. She comes from a background that values education, which inspired her to pursue a career in teaching. Marsya graduated in 2014 from the Indonesian University of Education with a degree in English Education. Right after graduation, she began her teaching career at a private high school in Bandung, where she has remained for the past decade.

Marsya's teaching journey began smoothly, starting with her thesis work at the same school where she would later secure a teaching position. This marked the beginning of a career dedicated to shaping the minds of high school students. Marsya's commitment to her profession is evident as she has never considered teaching elsewhere; her focus has always been on her students at this school.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Marsya faced the unprecedented

challenge of transitioning from traditional classroom teaching to distance learning. Initially, she struggled with the abrupt shift, like many of her colleagues. She had no prior experience with online platforms like Jibas or Google Classroom, and neither did her students. However, Marsya quickly adapted, developing new materials and methods to ensure that her students continued to learn effectively despite the circumstances.

Marsya's teaching philosophy is deeply rooted in her belief in the importance of student motivation and discipline, especially during the difficult period of distance learning. She worked tirelessly to keep her students engaged, offering continuous support and encouragement through various means, including WhatsApp and Google Classroom. She adapted her teaching strategies to the new reality, focusing on skills like reading and listening that were more feasible in an online environment, and gradually incorporating speaking and writing activities as she became more comfortable with the technology.

Despite the challenges, Marsya's dedication never wavered. She also pursued professional development, completing the Teacher Professional Education (PPG) program, which further solidified her commitment to her career. Marsya's goal is to continue growing as an educator and eventually become a civil servant, following in the footsteps of some of her peers. She is motivated by a deep sense of responsibility to her students and a desire to contribute meaningfully to their education.

Marsya's experience during the pandemic highlighted her resilience and adaptability as an educator. She believes that her students' success is not only dependent on the availability of technology but also on their intrinsic motivation and the support they receive from both teachers and parents. Looking back, Marsya feels proud of how she managed to navigate such a challenging period, ensuring that her students continued to receive quality education despite the difficulties.

Her story is one of commitment, growth, and an unwavering dedication to her students and profession. Marsya's journey as a teacher is a testament to her

resilience and passion for education, qualities that continue to drive her forward in her career. As she looks to the future, Marsya hopes to achieve her goal of becoming a civil servant and to continue making a positive impact on the lives of her students.

5. Melani

Melani is an experienced teacher in her late 40s who has spent more than 22 years teaching at a high school in Indonesia. She was raised with a sense of responsibility and a pursuit of education that have been the hallmarks of her long and varied career. Melani started her professional career as a local course and a training institution (LPK) teacher after completing her college education in 1998, then continued her road in formal educational institution when she entered the educational world in 2002. She spent the first few years teaching part time, taking a job in a secretarial school, another teaching computer courses, doing whatever she could to build the career she wanted close to home.

When Melani worked as a civil servant (ASN) that was the pivotal point of her career and it made her believe in formal education. She has worked formally and informally, taught in companies, and moved between cities such as Cirebon and Bandung. One of the things Melani is most proud of in her academic journey is her ability to adapt and be resilient, something that proved even more important when the COVID-19 pandemic hit and schools were forced to switch to online learning.

Melani may have had a particularly difficult time with the pandemic because she and I had to adopt new technologies and ways of teaching time and time again. At first, the technical demands of teaching online were hard for her: she said she wasn't very tech savvy. But she persisted through these challenges by utilizing tools such as Google Classroom, which she had started to learn prior to the pandemic, but was forced to make full use of as it became a necessity. Melani's experience with online learning was characterized by her approach to staying connected with her students, even in the midst of a distance learning setting.

Melani's way of teaching during the pandemic involved striking a balance between flexibility and structure. Even in the midst of doing her best to teach

navigation through an online realm, she made sure to understand her youth and comfort them. The content she chose was manageable, not overwhelming, and she paid special attention to her students' needs as they all found themselves contending with an even more demanding world than usual.

Fostering engagement between students, especially those who were new to the school and never met their classmates in person, was one of the greatest challenges Melani experienced during online learning. Yet through it all, Melani was dedicated to her students' learning and well-being, drawing on her experience and knowledge to support them as they navigated the challenges of learning remotely. Her perseverance and flexibility in response to the unique challenges we face are a testament to her commitment to education and the success of her students.

Melani's story as an educator is an inspiration of grit and determination. She has adapted to the changes in education, from the brick and mortar classroom to the new online learning environment, always putting the needs of her students first. Kaniz is the epitome of resilience, adaptability, and has an unwavering commitment to making a positive impact in the lives of her students.

6. Mike

Well Mike is a senior English teacher in his late forties and is in his 26th years of teaching. With a Bachelor Degree in English Education graduated from the Indonesia University of Education, he has a strong track record in his career. For the entirety of his career, Mike has taught in public and private schools alike; in every grade level imaginable. Not only does he have a thorough understanding of the subject matter but he also cares deeply about his students and it shows, earning him respect amongsthis peers.

Before the COVID-19 pandemic hit, Mike had built great relationships with his students. His friendly and supportive teaching style facilitated his ability to relate to his students on academic and personal levels. But, like many of his peers, the pandemic's abrupt transition to remote learning presented Mike with new challenges. Mike was initially intimidated by the technological aspects of remote teaching. As a teacher who had spent most of his career in in-person classrooms,

he found the switch to online spaces like Google Meet, Zoom and Google Classroom to be a challenging pivot.

Although nervous initially, Mike translated easily into the new teaching scene. The tools helped the teacher better engage with his students and connect them despite it being a time of social distancing. Mike had very limited prior exposure to technology, but he adapted quickly, and learned to use online tools for synchronous and asynchronous teaching. Educational apps such as, Google Forms for quizzes, Zoom for live sessions, and Google Classroom for assignments, were incorporated that kept him in contact with the students.

As a result of this, Mike endeavored to keep students engaged, even without direct contact, with his own remote teaching style. As one teacher noted during the focus group discussion that you moderated with his, he had to get especially creative to keep his students engaged — especially, given that many of his students had technical barriers to achievement (limited access to reliable internet connections and devices). He discovered that student motivation proved particularly problematic when students were home alone. But Mike put a lot of effort into figuring out ways to keep engaged with students, using tools to lend to synchronous lessons, group discussions and regular check-ins via WhatsApp. Through a series of challenges, Mike adapted his teaching to the remote context and showed a dedication to student learning by awarding more open-ended projects, where students continued to have meaningful learning experiences.

One of the biggest challenges that Mike encountered was balancing teaching content with meeting students' emotional needs in the pandemic. As a teacher, he was aware of the emotional work involved in online teaching, that he had to show up emotionally for his students who were experiencing not only academic pressures but also the stress and uncertainty wrought by the pandemic. Mike knew that consistent communication with both students and parents was crucial to providing a sense of community and support in such a difficult time.

Mike demonstrated resilience and adaptability throughout the pandemic.

His efforts to make sure that his students got a good education under the remote learning conditions highlighted the dedication to education that he has demonstrated throughout his professional life. In his teacher journal, he wrote that although he had been nervous at first about moving to remote teaching, the experience had ultimately expanded his teaching toolkit and enhanced his understanding of how he could lead students in a virtual classroom experience. In his reflections on his own practices, he was also attentive to the importance of continuous professional development and technology integration in education, as these were important for updating to ever-changing education practices.

As the pandemic wore on, Mike started to experiment with hybrid models of teaching, where he could mix and match online and offline instruction as government bans gradually eased. He believes that the history of remote teaching has changed the course of education forever and that digital tools will be increasingly within the framework of education even after the pandemic is over. As he reflects back on the 2020-2021 school year, Mike is pleased to think about the ways he adapted to the challenges of the pandemic, as well as the ways he is continuing to improve his practice to support his students. His story is a story of growth, innovation, and resilience with a steadfast commitment to ensuring his students receive the best education possible no matter what.

7. Monica

Monica is a high-spirited, passionate woman in her late forties, who was born and raised in Garut, a regency in West Java, Indonesia. Monica is from a family that held a strong tradition for academia. She graduated from Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia, Bandung with a Bachelor and a Master degree in Education. For the past 26 years, she has dedicated her life to furthering her own education and then instilling in her students a desire to learn and grow.

Monica has always been in pursuit of further learning during her professional journey so that she can adjust herself with the teaching methodologies of the present time. With an open mind to learn innovative strategies for education,

she became one of the active participants in the "Guru Penggerak" program, facilitating learning and encouraging other teachers. She travels around to be a resource person in different educational forums, focusing mainly on English teaching and game-based learning.

Then, the COVID-19 pandemic hit, schools closed, and learning moved into the digital space — all a big adjustment for Monica. Even with the challenges, she met the situation with her typical gusto. She had to master a new set of digital tools, including Zoom, Google Classroom and WhatsApp, to communicate with students and keep learning going. Monica took an innovative approach by including game-based learning in her virtual classrooms; It helped keep her students engaged, even with the challenges of remote learning.

Not only is she a professor to her students, but she works to instill confidence and critical thinking skills in her students as well. She had faith in the power of empathy — changing her teaching plans to fit the emotional and psychological needs of students, particularly in trying times.

The journey has not been seamless for Monica the educator. Yet she sees these challenges as opportunities for growth for herself as well as for her students. Today she is a continuous learner and innovator, as a school principal, still learning to better her classroom and also help her hundreds of teachers on the same path. Even in her spare time, she believes a good teacher is a lifelong learner and has personally continued her education, studying topics like Artificial Intelligence.

Monica is proud of the impact she has made in her students' lives and is determined to continue doing so with future generations. She has also enjoyed bringing hope and continuous improvement through her work, knowing that she set up her students on a path to success and perseverance in learning through life. Monica's story is one of resilience, adaptability, and an unyielding dedication to education.

8. Sandro

Meet Sandro, a 50-year-old devoted man from Indonesia who has been inspiring

the lives of young students in the role of an English teacher for more than two decades. He had been raised in Majalengka Regency, an area of rurality and strong community ties. Sandro studied English Education at IKIP Bandung (Institute of Teacher Training and Pedagogy) and graduated in 1996. He worked as a teacher in a Secretarial Academy in Tangerang for two years and became a civil servant teacher at a state junior high school in Majalengka Regency in 1999.

Sandro was not satisfied by the knowledge and experience that he had, so in a bid to increase his academics and due to his passion for education, he undertook his Master in management. This experience not only improved this particular students ability to perform tasks associated with schoolwork but served as validation of higher education professional development. For Sandro, teaching was a journey to be learned, and he embraced this learning trend, even going on study tours to schools in Australia to see how different teaching practices were and what the environment looked like.

Over the years, Sandro has been through some of the most groundbreaking transformations of the Indonesian education system, the most prominent being a contentious move towards distance learning caused by Covid-19. When the pandemic hit in 2020, Sandro was pushed into the trenches of emergency remote learning. Sandro wasn't comfortable with the digital tools needed for online education — Edmodo, Moodle and others — but moved quickly to new platforms like Zoom and Google Meet. Despite this knowledge causing an initial shock and it climbing a very steep learning curve at the time, though, he understood that in order to move with the times, he just had to accept and embrace these technologies.

Sandro is humble, and knows that he has to continue learning as the curriculum, the discipline he teaches in, and the needs of the students evolve. He has a strong dedication to his work as well as a realism that stems from his years working around his families bread and butter from that at a young age He learned a lot about how to be a professional but also how though he knows a lot, he will

always have more to learn. As he worked to adapt to remote learning, his experience was a reminder of the importance of flexibility and innovation in education as well as the need to make adjustments for future circumstances.

Sandro's career has been marked by numerous trials, from a lack of resources to a sudden move to new teaching methods. But he has always shown the determination and dedication to his students. Even in the face of distance learning challenges, like students not having smartphones or reliable internet, Sandro tried to create solutions—learning modules and worksheets for students to pick up from school.

Sandro has come a long way, and he remains committed to being a loving educator — with the ability to adapt to the demands of a changing profession. He still loves being a teacher because he wants to make sure his students are learning, and whether it is face to face or distance learning, he wants to be the best teacher they have. This is a story of resilience, lifelong learning, and dedication to students' success.

9. Wulan

Meet Wulan – a veteran teacher in her late 50s who has devoted more than 30 years of her life to teaching English in Majalengka Regency, Indonesia. A native of the area, Wulan started out as an honorary teacher in 1989 while studying at Universitas Gati, receiving a Diploma in English. A passion for education and a sense of duty to her community fueled her and she worked tirelessly, splitting herself between teaching and education.

Wulan has a colourful and ever-evolving career. She has taught at a variety of schools, including SMP Muhammadiyah, SMA Muhammadiyah, and SMK (Vocational High School) Tridaya. Wulan has become quite knowledgeable and professional throughout the years. She is very flexible and considers the development of her students very seriously.

Like many educators globally, Wulan faced immense challenges as the COVID-19 pandemic unfolded. “But it also has given me a new perspective on

school and education,” she said, recalling when schools closed in March 2020, and she was scared, unsure of how she would be able to keep giving her students the education that they needed. Nonetheless, she was proactive and had foreseen the risk of schools closing. Within days, she adjusted to the new normal, using technology like WhatsApp and Google Classroom to keep in touch and deliver lessons. Notwithstanding her students' limited access to advanced technology, she aided their learning with virtue and dedication.

Wulan responded, laughing and noting that her approach to teaching during the pandemic was pragmatic but also compassionate. Receptive of the limitations that her students had, she learned to adapt her teaching and assessment approaches. She taught listening skills through voice recordings and gave summaries of textbooks to make learning

more accessible. She often communicated with both the students and their parents, reminding them to be diligent about deadlines and getting them to participate in their own success, demonstrating her investment in their buy-in with the subject.

It has been a career defined by resilience and adaptiveness. In the face of all the challenges she was facing, even as we taught and learned remotely, she was determined to care for and teach her students. Having made a notable impact on her students' lives, Wulan thinks of her career with contentment as she heads in to retirement. She will be remembered for her hard work, zest for life, and dedication to education.

3.3 Procedure

To safeguard the research to yield valid, reliable, and credible results in answering research questions or solving problems, Johnson (2018) highlights the importance of following the steps or procedure prudently and consistently. Research procedure also aids researchers in avoiding common drawbacks such as bias, error, plagiarism, or fraud that may compromise the quality of their study

(Smith et al., 2020). The journey of this research followed the following procedure outlined by Creswell (2013). The procedure is visualized in figure 3.1:

1. Articulate research questions and objectives.

Riessman (2008) states that it is far vital to have a well-defined objective whilst engaging in studies, such as investigating, illustrating, or elucidating a phenomenon. It is also strongly counseled to formulate specific and centered inquiries that serve as a guiding framework for the studies. In this work I posed three research questions to investigate the ways in which Indonesian EFL teachers constructed, enacted and applied teaching presence in an online context. These questions informed the data collection and analysis processes, so that the professional story of these educators working in remote education programs would be a central concern.

2. Choose one or more participants for the study.

It is essential to select who possess pertinent and substantial narratives pertaining to the area of interest. It is imperative to take into account the ethical concerns and secure informed consent from the individuals involved (Clandinin and Husu, 2017)

3. Gather the narratives/stories from the participants.

To effectively gather and document the narratives of the participants, suitable data collection strategies, such as conducting interviews, examining papers, or analyzing artifacts were employed. As suggested by Pino Gavidia & Adu (2022), it is important to demonstrate adaptability and receptiveness to the participants' feedback. Additionally, one should inquire for further details or explanations as necessary. As part of my research, I elicited the stories of Indonesian EFL teachers through semi-structured interviews, collections of reflective teaching journals, and focus group discussions. Together, these methods allowed for rich, context-specific narratives of the ways in which teachers applied teaching presence strategies within their particular online

classrooms. When there is unclear or questionable information, participants are asked for further clarification.

4. Engage in collaboration with the participants/storytellers.

It is advisable to engage the participants in the process of collaboratively building and understanding their narratives. It is imperative to verify the correctness and validity of the narratives by consulting the participants themselves. Moreover, as recommended through Hyvärinen (2010), it is crucial to honor their dreams and possibilities about the usage and portrayal of their studies. In this study, the participants shared their stories when they got together through a Focus Group Discussion (FGD) through which they collaboratively built an understanding of their narratives.

5. Analyze and Synthesize Narratives.

Narrative inquiry was used to investigate the experiences of Indonesian EFL teachers with online teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic. The data were via semi-structured interviews, reflective teaching journals, and focus group interviews which were analyzed employing thematic and narrative analysis techniques to find themes, strategies of teaching presence, and the impact of context that fit with the research questions. To substantiate the claims and interpretation, proof from the narratives may be used. Creswell (2013) emphasizes the importance of writing a lucid and cohesive narrative that introduces and examines your findings, implications, and limitations.

6. Write a Narrative.

The researcher developed a clear and coherent narrative that presented and discussed findings, implications, and limitations. Then, evidence from the narratives was used to support claims and interpretations (Creswell, 2013).

7. Verify the precision of the report.

To ensure the credibility and dependability of your report, the study employed strategies such as triangulation, member checking, reflexivity, and peer review. It is important to recognize and reference the sources you have used and

place your study within the context of the existing body of literature (Tracy, 2010).

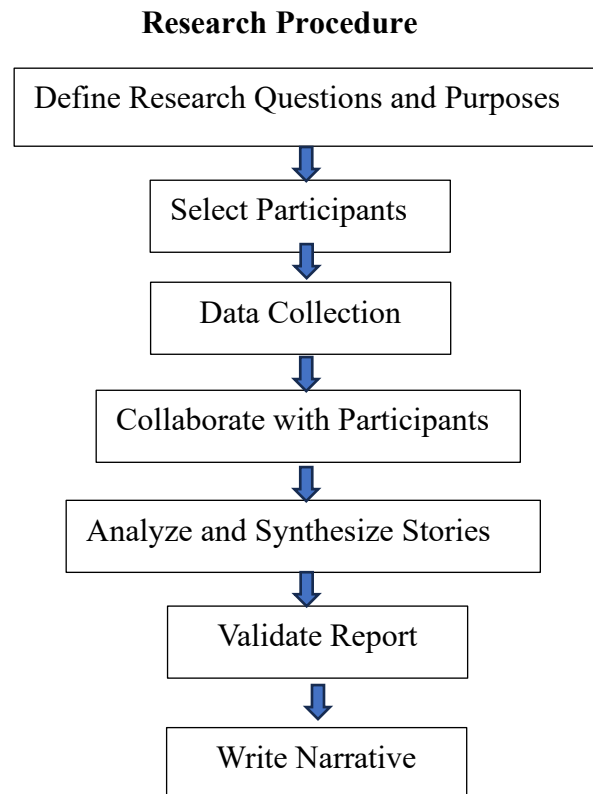


Figure 3 1 Research procedure of the narrative inquiry approach
recommended by Creswell (2013)

3.4 Data Collection Methods

The choice of data series strategies for this study demonstrated an intensive approach to documenting the diverse reviews of English as a foreign Language (EFL) teachers in a digital learning environment (VLE) throughout emergency remote teaching. The utilization of semi-structured interviews, teacher journals, and focus group Discussions (FGD) was intended to accumulate comprehensive and in-depth understandings from private contemplations, institutional dynamics, and communal encounters (Smith, 2021; Jones & Brown, 2019). Semi-structured interviews offered a radical examination of people's

viewpoints, at the same time as trainer journals served as a method for continuous introspection and recording of classroom encounters (Johnson, 2018). Furthermore, Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) created a collaborative setting that fostered the exchange of ideas, enabling participants to uncover shared insights while also facilitating a deeper analysis of group interactions and collective decision-making processes (Clark & Lee, 2017). By integrating FGDs with other research methods, scholars could establish a comprehensive foundation for examining Teaching Presence strategies and instructional practices in emergency remote teaching contexts. Data collection methods for each respective purpose can be summarized in Table 3.2 below.

Table 3 2 Data Collection Methods and Each Respective Objective

Data Collection Methods	Objectives	References
Semi-structured Interview	To mine the data related to teachers' in-depth perspectives on the experience of teaching English as a foreign language (EFL) during emergency distance learning.	(Smith, 2021)
Teacher Journal	To encourage unremitting self-evaluation and documentation of classroom teaching and learning activities through which teachers can reflect on their experience and teaching strategies.	(Johnson, 2018)
Focus Group Discussion (FGD)	To give room for a collaborative environment to explore shared experiences, insights, and group dynamics related to teaching practices in the Virtual Learning Environment.	(Clark & Lee, 2017)

3.4.1 Semi-Structured Interview

Interviews were conducted both virtually through Zoom and in person. Through these interviews with EFL teachers, the study aimed to probe Teaching Presence strategies — how they designed and organized their online courses, as well as how they created discourse and engaged via direct instructions. As the active lecturer doing the research and the teachers who participated had busy schedules, a blend of virtual and face-to-face interviews was a practical and efficient method

given the time limitations. Furthermore, the presence of "distance" constraints highlighted the need for flexibility in the format of interviews. When getting everyone in a room could be problematic due to time or space constraints, virtual interviews could offer a time-efficient solution. It also allowed for gathering critical insight without the burden of being too far away. All the interviews—via Zoom, of course—were automatically recorded and stored on Google Drive. It also allowed the participants and the researcher to see each other virtually and proved especially beneficial in capturing expressions, body language, and inflexions. In contrast to this, under circumstances when both the researcher and the participants could meet, the face-to-face interview allowed for a much more intimate and detailed exchange. This hybrid approach aimed to balance the logistics around time and distance with the benefits of being face-to-face, allowing for richer engagement and more thorough information collection.

This statement was based on my personal experience as a lecturer-in-lieu, as well as also going through emergency remote teaching (Johnson, 2020), so I felt a mixture of both virtual and face-to-face interviews would be preferable. While virtual interviews are able to accommodate greater participant diversity, in-person interviews are able to promote a greater depth of interpersonal connection and non-verbal interaction (Smith et al., 2019). This dual method offered a thorough picture of the presence strategies used by EFL instructors within a virtual learning environment (VLE) throughout emergency remote teaching.

Preparing Interview Questions: The interview questions were prepared in advance to allow rich data collection from interviews that respond to presence strategies relevant to the research questions. A semi-structured interview was utilized due to its balance of structure and flexibility (Smith et al., 2020). Interviewers had a specific list of questions or areas at hand but could adjust and customize their questions based on participant responses (Jones, 2018). This flexibility allows for a broader exploration of the participants' experiences and perspectives.

Here are the significant points that instructors functioning from a distance should seek to accomplish in structuring and organizing an online class successfully, guiding discourse amongst participants, and giving direct instructions to class participants. These insights were derived from a range of sources (Anderson et al., 2001; Baker, 2010; Lowenthal & Parscal, 2008). Each item of the guiding questions, which corresponds to each research question, for teacher journals, FGD, and interviews, in particular, is justified and elaborated in detail in Subchapter 2.5, point 2.5, pages 50 to 81: *Conceptualizing Teaching Presence*. The list of items can be seen in attachment 4. However, those guiding questions can be summarized in Table 3.3 below.

Table 3.3 Matrix of Alignment Between Research Questions and Interview Items

Research Question	Focus Area	Representative Interview Items
RQ1: How do teachers design and organize their online course(s)?	Course planning, structure, and expectations	- Learning objectives and course overview; Initiating teacher-student interaction; Clear instructions and technology use; Setting participation expectations; Assignment timelines and reminders; Active learning strategies; Assessment alignment; Teacher's involvement; Conversational tone
RQ2: How do teachers facilitate discourse among course participants?	Building and guiding dialogue, fostering community	- Icebreakers and trust-building; Discussion participation guidelines; Engaging question techniques; Challenging student ideas; Monitoring and shaping discussion; Modeling contributions; Meaning-making and clarification; Encouraging openness and inclusion; Summarizing and consensus-building; Sharing personal meaning
RQ3: How do teachers engage in direct instruction?	Knowledge delivery, scaffolding, and reflection	- Sharing expertise and addressing misconceptions; Providing resources and external content; Connecting abstract ideas; Using personal anecdotes; Delivering focused content; Offering feedback and guidance; Prompting reflection and cognitive dissonance;

		Scaffolding understanding; Annotating scholarly work
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The table above shows the data collection instruments used in this study—semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions (FGDs), and teacher journals—were carefully developed to align with the study’s three core research questions. Each set of interview items was designed to explore teachers’ professional experiences, reflections, and strategies associated with teaching presence in virtual English language instruction during the pandemic.

To address **Research Question 1**, which explores how teachers design and organize their online courses, participants responded to items concerning their articulation of learning objectives, course introductions, and strategies to initiate engagement. Additional prompts focused on instructional clarity, technology integration, assessment design, and balancing conversational tone with academic rigor. These questions probed the intentional planning decisions that shape the structure and delivery of online learning environments.

For **Research Question 2**, which investigates how teachers facilitate discourse among course participants, the interview items explored communicative and relational strategies, such as the use of icebreakers, discussion guidelines, and open-ended questioning. Participants were also invited to reflect on their methods of monitoring interactions, modeling effective dialogue, encouraging inclusive participation, and integrating personal meaning to cultivate a sense of community. These elements were tailored to understand how social presence is fostered through facilitative teaching.

In response to **Research Question 3**, examining how teachers engage in direct instruction, the items focused on knowledge transmission, scaffolding, and diagnostic feedback. Teachers described how they corrected misconceptions, suggested supplementary resources, connected abstract concepts to learners’ contexts, and provided ongoing evaluative guidance. Questions also invited

participants to discuss how they use reflective prompts and personalized commentary to deepen students' cognitive engagement and understanding.

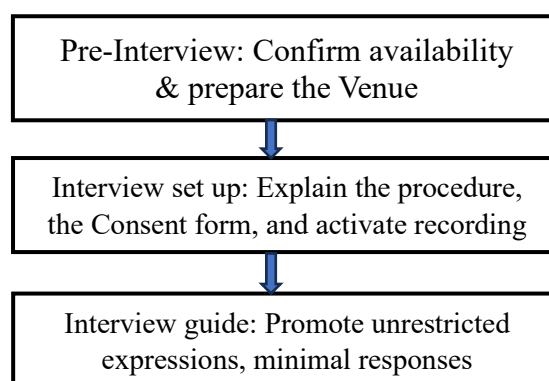
All three data sources—interviews, FGDs, and journals—were structured around these domains, ensuring coherence between participant responses and the study's conceptual framework grounded in the Community of Inquiry. This alignment enabled a rich, triangulated exploration of teaching presence strategies across multiple modalities of storytelling and reflection.

Before carrying out the interview, for face-to-face interviews, research participants were first confirmed as having free time, and were also given the freedom to choose a truly comfortable place, at home or another place far from home, so that they could talk comfortably and openly. Likewise, with online interviews via Zoom, they determine the free day and time. Interviews were also conducted in a way that minimized the use of short answers, which also made it easier for participants to share their stories. Data collection was regulated by considering privacy and ethics, including obtaining consent to use interview fragments for research reports after the interviews were completed. By following these procedures and guidelines, both virtual and face-to-face interviews could yield valuable narrative data for the research.

To have a productive interview, as recommended by Johnson, (2019), a concise agenda was be set by providing a detailed explanation of the interview procedure to the participant and giving them the opportunity to examine the consent form. Consent to record the interview was obtained, followed by introducing the interview guide and activating the recording equipment, since, according to Smith & Brown (2021), it is crucial for mutual trustworthiness. When utilizing the interview guide, I promoted the interviewee's unrestricted expression of their opinions (Clark, 2017).

To ensure a productive and thorough session, it is essential to take detailed notes, seek clarification when necessary, and allow the interviewee to conclude the discussion organically (Jones, 2020). Sharing a copy of the recording

with the interviewee promotes transparency and encourages active participant engagement, ultimately supporting a more robust and well-rounded data collection process (Kvale, Pharo, & Darch, 2023). Taking into account the depth of information regarding the participants' experience in how they designed the course, facilitated learning, and directed instruction, the interview for each participant would be likely to be conducted several times, however, it also depended on other factors such as the diversity of participants, the time and resources available (Smith & Brown, 2021). In other words, the number of interviews required evolved as the data collection and analysis progressed. Interviews were conducted until the data reached saturation, which was the point at which no new information or themes emerge from the interviews (Naeem et al., 2024). Data saturation showed that the interviews had sufficient data to thoroughly answer the research questions. A few pilot interviews would likely be conducted at the beginning of the research to help refine interview questions and approaches. These first interviews, a researcher-to-participant introduction aimed to establish openness, form a relationship, and foster interest in the study, making the participant feel safe and at ease (Riessman, 2008), could last 30 minutes or so. During the initial interviews, the goal of the study, as well as the measures for data privacy and confidentiality, were reviewed, and all questions were answered (Tracy, 2024). These interviews could reveal whether adjustments were needed, and then feedback from these initial interviews could



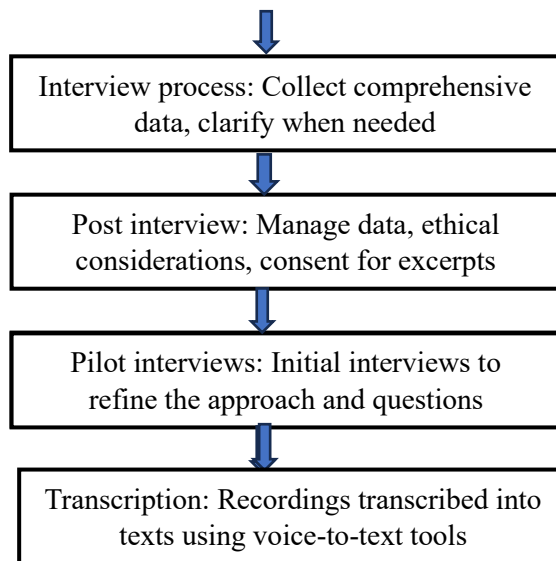


Figure 3 2 Stages of Conducting Interviews

be incorporated into the research design. Indonesian language was used during the interviews. The language is used in daily communication and interaction so that the participants felt more comfortable and were able to express everything in detail. The videotaped interviews were then transcribed into text with the help of Indonesian speech-to-text/voice-to-text- online [typingguru.net](https://www.typingguru.net) (<https://www.typingguru.net/voice-to-text/indonesian-voice-typing>). The transcription was immediately carried out after each interview. The recording and transcription files were saved in Google Drive.

3.4.2 Teacher Journal

Another data collecting technique employed was “Teacher Journals”. Teacher Journals serve as a pertinent tool for documenting instructors' previous experiences (Escalante & Read, 2022). Farrell (2015) states that they offer a forum for educators to contemplate their instructional methods, difficulties, achievements, and ongoing professional growth. Teachers can enhance their professional development and contribute to language teaching and learning research by keeping reflective journals. These diaries serve as useful records of teachers' experiences

and thoughts, providing a deeper understanding of the intricate aspects of the field (Borg, 2003). The use of Teacher Journals is summarized in Figure 3.4

The use of Teacher Journals was effective in collecting data in the research realm due to various factors. The main factor in these journals was a means for English as a foreign language teachers to record and store their teaching experiences, difficulties and achievements in creating and implementing online learning. Primarily, this approach provided EFL teachers with a structured platform to document their experiences, challenges, and accomplishments in designing and delivering online courses, fostering deeper reflection on their teaching practices (Richards & Farrell, 2005). Reflecting on their teaching practices enabled educators to develop a deeper understanding of the complexities involved in language instruction and acquisition. This process enabled educators to delve into essential aspects of their profession, including their evolving teacher identity, effective instructional techniques, and the influence of various contextual factors (Borg, 2015). Teacher journals are valuable tools in academic research, providing real and detailed insights into educators' experiences, challenges, and viewpoints (Creswell, 2013). By writing about their teaching methods, reflections, and professional growth, teachers become more self-aware and improve their strategies. Keeping a journal also supports ongoing professional development by encouraging teachers to think critically about their methods and find ways to improve (Zeichner & Liston, 2013). This makes teacher journals not only useful for gathering research data but also for enhancing professional growth. In the context of teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL) online, they help educators better understand the complexities of their work.

Guidelines for Journal Entries were prepared to successfully mine rich and reflective insights regarding EFL teachers' experiences in a Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) during emergency remote instruction. In the guidelines for the journal entries, the participants were assigned to submit a journal entry once every two weeks, in which one journal entry represents their reflection on their teaching

in six months or one semester of remote instruction. They were given two weeks to write the journal in order that they had ample time for contemplation. The length of the journal ranged from 400-500 words. They were encouraged to make a reflection on various aspects such as contexts of teaching, instructional activities, students' learning, professional responsibilities and development. Each participant should submit four journals, which were equal to four semesters or two years of pandemic from March 2020 to September 2021, when all schools in Indonesia were completely shut down.

Besides guidelines, participants were provided with “journal prompts” or questions for them (EFL teachers) to contemplate and reflect on in their journals. The objectives of the prompts were to encourage the participants to reflect on their experiences related to course design, learning facilitation, and direct instruction performed during emergency remote teaching. The following are examples of the prompts:

1. Reflect on your experience of designing instructional activities for one semester at the beginning of emergency remote teaching. When designing a semester plan, what variables did you consider to ensure its effectiveness?
2. Explain how you facilitate students during distance learning. Also explain what kind of approach or strategy to encourage students to have meaningful interactions and support their language development.
3. Reflecting back on specific learning sessions at that time, how did you deliver clear guidance to facilitate the acquisition of language skills? What obstacles and difficulties do you face, and how do you overcome them in order to increase your teaching efficiency?

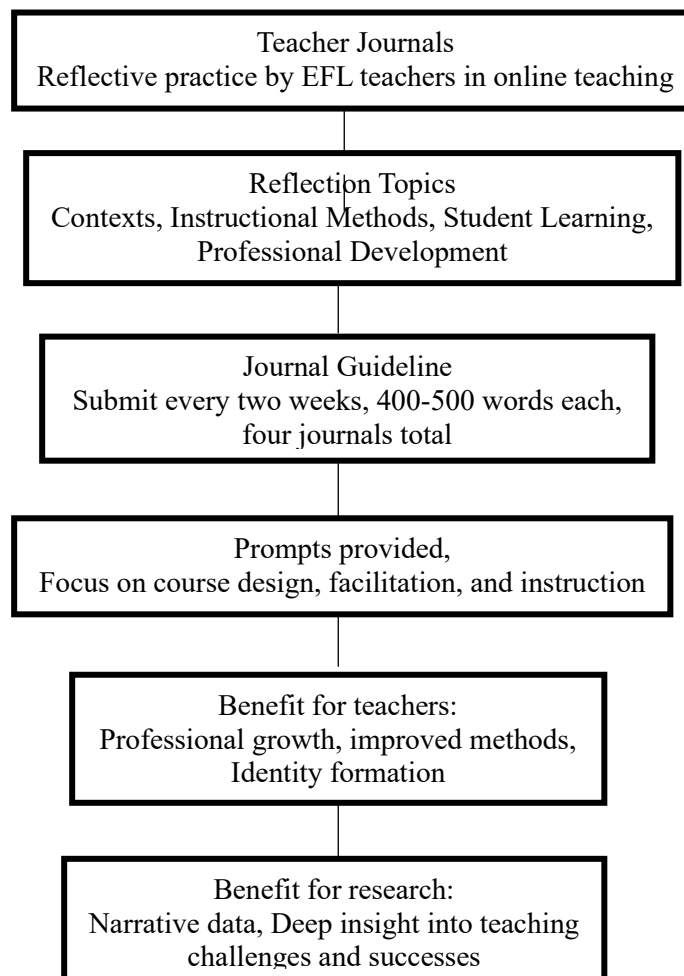


Figure 3 3 Teacher Journals

3.4.3 Focus Group Discussion (FGD)

The third and last data collecting technique was Focus Group Discussions (FGDs). Focus Group Discussion (FGD) was an effective approach for collecting data to investigate the strategies used by Indonesian EFL teachers in a Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) during emergency remote teaching. Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) offer a cooperative platform for participants to freely share and examine their experiences. This provides a thorough knowledge of the instructional presence inside the Community of Inquiry (COI) framework (Cleveland-Innes,

Garrison, & Vaughan, 2018, p. 67). Morgan (2018) claims that group dynamics allow FGD to provide interesting and useful data by means of participant cooperation. In the framework of the narrative inquiry method and the post-pandemic scenario, FGD allows a collective narrative exposing the shared experiences, techniques, and challenges faced by teachers during emergency remote teaching (Riessman, 2008). This approach aligns with the primary goal of narrative inquiry: to understand the meaning people give to their experiences (Creswell & Poth, 2016).

FGDs possess several advantages, such as their capacity to encompass a wide range of viewpoints, foster dialogue, and produce valuable insights that go beyond individual encounters (Morgan, 2018). In order to address any vulnerabilities, it is essential to create a congenial and all-encompassing atmosphere during Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), guaranteeing that all participants feel unrestricted in voicing their viewpoints (Shabina, Amit, & Eram, 2024). Moreover, FGDs conducted alongside individual interviews are likely to provide a fuller understanding of people's life experiences in the setting of a collective tale (Morgan, 2018). Clarity in the proper guiding of the discussions, careful preparation of the questions, and ensuring that the contributions are evenly spread will enhance the validity and reliability of Focus Group Discussion data collected (Shabina, Amit, & Eram, 2024). Figure 3.5 shows how online Zoom-mediated FGD was conducted.

So, when it comes to running Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) to dig into how Indonesian EFL teachers were handling things in a Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) during those emergency remote teaching times, I certainly had to have a solid plan in place. All this so that the research ran well and smoothly. Morgan (2018) provides several insights, the details of which can be seen below.

1. Preparation for the FGDs:

- a. Determine the goals to be achieved: make sure the researcher really knows what exactly he/she wants to accomplish through this FGD. It's crucial to align these goals with the research questions, especially those

that focus on presence techniques in the VLE. Like, what exactly is he/she trying to find out?

- b. Choosing Participants: Select a diverse group of Indonesian EFL teachers who have experienced the challenges of emergency remote teaching. Key factors to consider include teaching experience, academic qualifications, and level of technological proficiency, as these elements significantly influence instructional effectiveness in virtual learning environments (Morgan, 2018).
- c. Informed Consent: Make sure to whip up some clear consent forms that lay out what the study is all about. It's super important to stress that joining in is totally voluntary and that their privacy will be respected.

By taking these steps, you can set the stage for meaningful discussions that will provide valuable insights into the teaching strategies used in these challenging times.

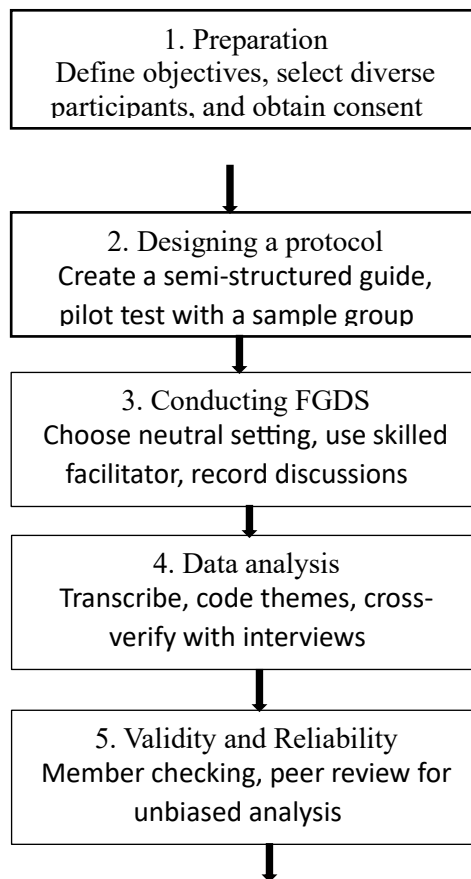
2. Designing FGD Protocol:

- a. Formulate a Structured Guide: Construct a semi-structured guide comprising open-ended inquiries that specifically tackle the research questions. Incorporate prompts that pertain to the course design, the facilitation of discourse, and the use of direct instruction methodologies.
 - b. Pilot Testing: Administer a pilot Focus Group Discussion (FGD) session with a limited number of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers to enhance the guide, guaranteeing its clarity and alignment with the study objectives (Morgan (2018).
- ## 3. Conducting Focus Group Discussions (FGDs):
- a. Setting: Select an appropriate and impartial venue for the FGDs, whether it be in-person or online. Ensure that participants are provided with the necessary technological resources to engage in virtual discussions.

- b. Facilitation: Assign a skilled facilitator who is knowledgeable in both focus group discussion techniques and the study subject. The facilitator should promote candid conversation, efficiently handle time, and guarantee that all participants are given a chance to contribute.
 - c. Recording: Utilize audio or video recording apparatus to document the discussions, ensuring that participants are cognizant and have provided their consent. Note-taking can enhance recordings by capturing non-verbal clues and providing more context.
4. Analyzing Data
- a. The first step is all about getting those FGD recordings down in writing. You really want to capture every word exactly how the participants said it—no changes, no alterations. This way, their original voices and expressions shine through, and you can truly reflect their thoughts and feelings.
 - b. Coding and Categorization: Once transcribed, use thematic coding to spot repeated ideas, emotions, and ways of expressing presence. This helps in grouping patterns that show what matters most to the participants.
 - c. Cross-Verification: This verification was achieved through triangulation, that was to make sure your findings are solid and compare them with individual interviews or other available data sources. Morgan (2018) mentions that this triangulation boosts the trustworthiness of your analysis
5. Ensuring Validity and Reliability
- a. Member Checking: Share early interpretations with participants to confirm or clarify insights (Shabina, Amit, & Eram, 2024).
 - b. Peer Review: Invite feedback from fellow researchers to reduce personal bias and improve analysis quality (Morgan, 2018).
6. Reporting and Dissemination:

- a. Report Writing: Write a thorough report summarising the FGD results using direct quotations and anecdotes to strengthen the story.
- b. Dissemination: Share study results by means of academic papers, conferences, or seminars, so helping to support the larger educational community.

Figure 3.4 below is a flow chart explaining the method of collecting data through Focus Group Discussions (FGDS) from the research. It outlines the critical phases from preparation to dissemination in sequential clarity and retains a bottom line of not only the essence but also the methodology of FGDS for quick reference.



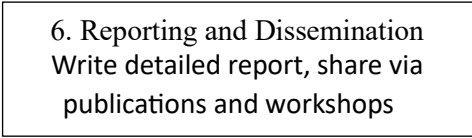


Figure 3 4 Visual Flowchart Summarizing Focus Group Discussion (FGD)

Table 3.4 below simplifies key aspects of data collection methods. Data in this study were collected via three methods and focused on the practices of EFL teachers during ERT: semi-structured interviews, teacher journals, and focus group discussions. Semi-structured virtual and in-person interviews were flexible enough to obtain rich data on teacher presence strategies while addressing time and distance challenges. The use of teacher journals as a reflective practice for documenting one’s experiences, as well as for supporting growth in one’s professional journey, allowed for the collection of thick, narrative data over a longer time frame. The use of focus groups facilitated a group interaction that uncovered shared experiences and coping mechanisms in a supportive environment. These methods provided a well-rounded, three-dimensional view of teaching in a Virtual Learning Environment (VLE).

Table 3 4 Data Collection Methods Summary

Data Collection Method	Description	Advantages	Consideration
Semi-structured Interviews	Interview with EFL teachers to explore teaching presence strategies employed during emergency remote teaching	Allows for personal insights, virtual options for broad inclusion, flexible	Limited non-verbal cues in a virtual setting, time limitations

Teacher Journals	Through journals, teachers made reflections on their teaching experiences and professional development.	Provide qualitative insights, encourage reflective practice	Time commitment is compulsory, relies on self-reporting
Focus Group discussions (FGDs)	Group discussions to comprehend collective Teaching Presence Strategies and challenges	A comprehensive understanding of shared experiences, collective insights	Guaranteeing equal involvement, group dynamics

Following these varied and strong data collection methods, the analysis section describes how the data was analyzed.

3.5 Data Analysis

The research employed a narrative analysis approach to analyze the data, as narrative analysis was considered the most suitable method for collecting data through narrative inquiry. Moreno et al. (2022) assert, narrative analysis is an effective approach for exploring and interpreting the stories told by participants in qualitative research. This approach aligns well with the objectives of this study, which focuses on teachers' experiences and strategies in the context of emergency remote instruction. Asamoah et al (2023) emphasize that narrative analysis is particularly relevant when examining the experiences of individuals in specific, often transformative contexts, such as the shift to online learning due to the pandemic. Narrative analysis also allows the researcher to delve into the intricacies of the teachers' journeys, challenges, and adaptations within the virtual learning

environment (VLE) setting, a focus central to this study (Liu, Zhan, and Wang (2023).

This method is especially efficient in understanding individual and situational elements of experiences, which are fundamental to answering the research questions, as noted by Martin, Tarnanen, and Tynjälä (2021). The analysis of qualitative data gathered through interviews, teacher journals, and focus group discussions for the research on "Teaching Presence Strategies in Virtual Learning Environments: Indonesian EFL Teachers' Voices" was conducted systematically to draw meaningful insights relevant to the research questions. The following steps outline how both NVivo 12 Plus and ChatGPT 4 were integrated into the thematic analysis process, ensuring a balanced and comprehensive approach.

NVivo is a qualitative data analysis (QDA) software that plays a pivotal role in the organization, coding, and systematic analysis of qualitative data. It is particularly effective for researchers who need to handle complex and large datasets, such as interview transcripts, focus group discussions, surveys, and other forms of textual data. NVivo's primary strength lies in its ability to manage and categorize data efficiently, allowing researchers to organize their materials into coherent datasets for further analysis (Jackson & Bazeley, 2019).

One of NVivo's key functions is its coding and thematic analysis capabilities. Coding involves the process of assigning specific themes or categories to segments of data, and NVivo simplifies this task by enabling both manual and automated coding. Researchers can create codes based on their research questions, theoretical frameworks, or initial readings of the data, ensuring that the analysis is grounded in the study's objectives. NVivo's manual coding approach allows researchers to tag segments of text that reflect particular themes or ideas. On the other hand, its automated coding function—driven by keyword searches or concept identification—facilitates the exploration of large datasets, providing an efficient means of identifying key patterns across textual data (Saldana, 2021). This dual capability of manual and automated coding enhances NVivo's flexibility, making it

suitable for various stages of qualitative research, from early data exploration to in-depth thematic analysis.

In addition to coding, NVivo provides powerful tools for pattern identification within the data. Its built-in query functions allow researchers to explore relationships, patterns, and trends within the data. By analyzing the frequency of specific terms or the co-occurrence of themes across different data segments, NVivo helps researchers uncover significant insights that may not be immediately obvious. This feature is particularly useful when dealing with large datasets, as it helps to identify underlying patterns and trends that can inform the development of key themes and categories (Jackson & Bazeley, 2019).

Furthermore, NVivo's robust visualization tools provide researchers with the means to create charts, models, and diagrams that illustrate the relationships between themes and categories. These visual aids not only enhance the clarity of the analysis but also facilitate the communication of findings, making them easier to present and interpret in academic settings (Jackson & Bazeley, 2019). By visually mapping out the connections between different themes, NVivo enables researchers to gain a more holistic understanding of the data and its implications.

The role NVivo 12 Plus plays in this research is that of software, which acts as an instrument to enable systematic qualitative data analyses via a cyclical six step process. As depicted in figure 3.5, the process starts with bringing varied sources of data – interviews, teacher diaries, focus group conversations – into the software. The researcher then delves into the content, searching for new concepts and codes key excerpts into thematic nodes of strategies that fall under the teaching presence. Queries can be executed to find specific keywords, and NVivo has the capacity to create visual aids including charts and word clouds to help identify trends or participant answers. The above characteristics all help provide a strong interpretive process consistent with narrative inquiry, producing interpretations with depth and transparency and in concert with the narrative's purpose.

In sum, NVivo is an invaluable tool for qualitative research, offering a comprehensive suite of features that support data management, coding, thematic analysis, and pattern identification. Its ability to manage large volumes of data, alongside its capacity for both manual and automated coding, makes it a versatile tool for researchers at all stages of qualitative inquiry. Through its visualization capabilities, NVivo also enhances the presentation and interpretation of qualitative findings, making it an essential resource for scholars engaged in qualitative research.

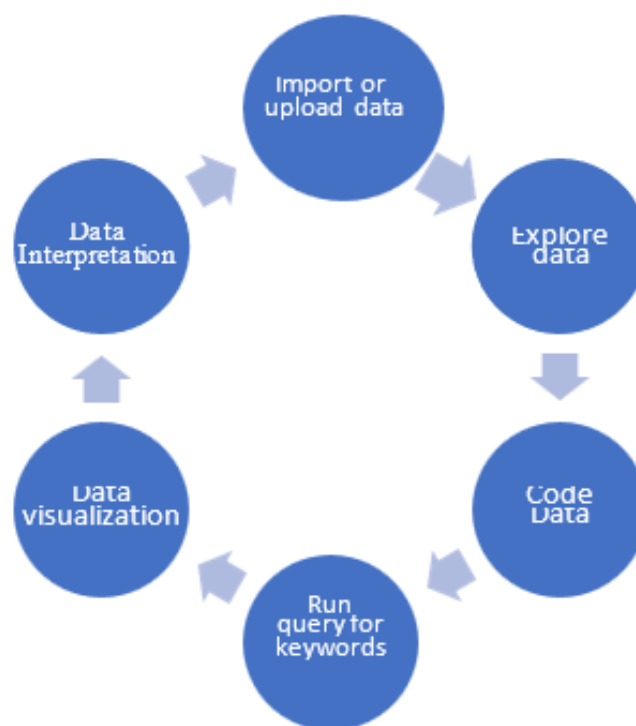


Figure 3 5 The Roles of NVivo 12 Plus in Data Analysis

ChatGPT 4 is an emerging tool in qualitative research, providing invaluable assistance in thematic analysis. While AI tools like ChatGPT is not yet universally used as primary analysis tools, they are gaining recognition for their ability to assist researchers in managing large datasets and offering initial coding suggestions, data summarization, and contextual analysis. As highlighted by

Zapanta, (2025), AI tools can improve research efficiency, particularly in handling unstructured qualitative data. Additionally, Kyriakou & Otterbacher (2023) emphasize that AI has the potential to assist researchers in identifying patterns and suggesting themes, though human oversight is still necessary for the final interpretation. Thus, ChatGPT is an excellent complementary tool for enhancing and streamlining the data analysis process while ensuring that human expertise remains central to final interpretations. This method is especially efficient in understanding individual and situational elements of experiences, which are fundamental to answering the research questions, as noted by Martin, Tarnanen, and Tynjälä (2018). The analysis of qualitative data gathered through interviews, teacher journals, and focus group discussions for the research on "Teaching Presence Strategies in Virtual Learning Environments: Indonesian EFL Teachers' Voices" were conducted systematically to draw meaningful insights relevant to the research questions. The following steps (depicted in Figure 3.6) outline how both NVivo 12 Plus and ChatGPT 4 were integrated into the thematic analysis process, ensuring a balanced and comprehensive approach:

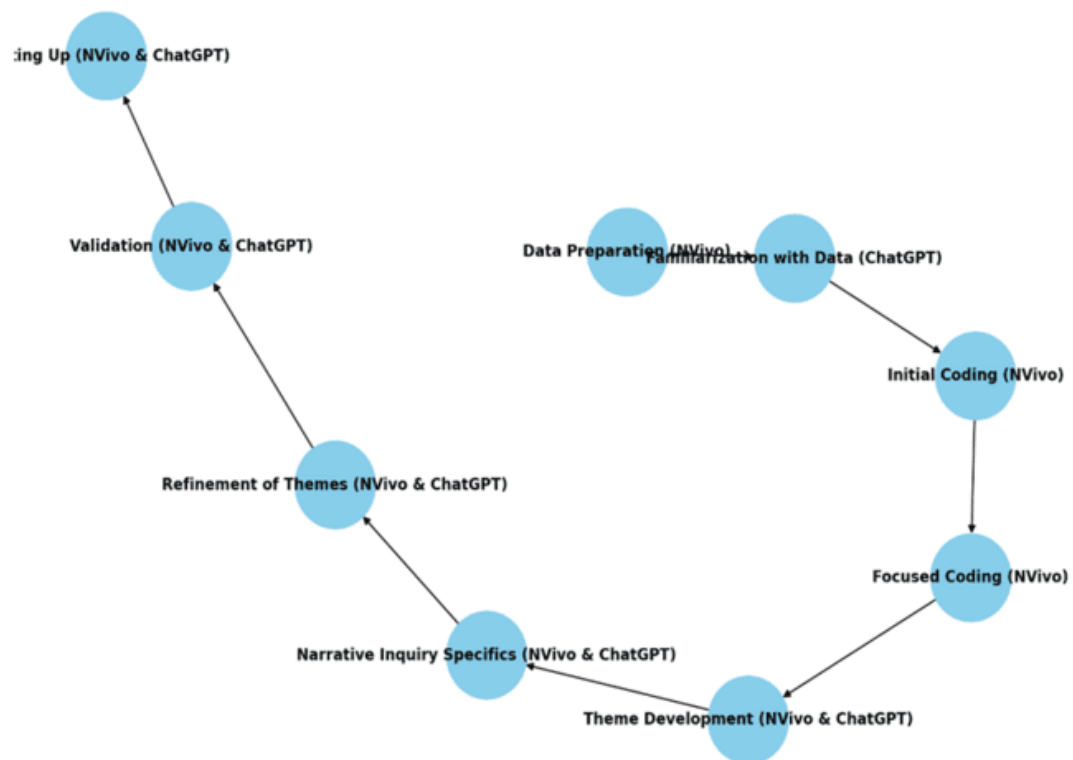


Figure 3 6 NVivo 12 Plus and ChatGPT 4 Integration Steps

1. Data

Preparation

The data analysis process begins with organizing, reducing, and preparing the collected data (Harding, T., & Whitehead, D., 2016). All interviews and Focus Group Discussions were carefully transcribed and translated into English. Non-verbal cues, when relevant, was also documented. These transcripts, along with teacher journals, were organized and stored using NVivo 12 Plus, a qualitative data analysis software that helps streamline the data management process, ensuring that the data is structured and easily accessible for further analysis.

Role of NVivo: NVivo were primarily responsible for organizing and storing the data efficiently. It allowed for easy retrieval of interview transcripts and focus group discussion data, providing a solid foundation for subsequent thematic analysis.

2. Familiarization with Data

After the interviews, like the one with Ms. Aline, a veteran EFL teacher in Bandung, were transcribed and translated into English, familiarization with the data began with multiple readings of the transcripts and teacher journals to absorb, as much as possible, the context, intonation, and subtle nuances of the data. For example, Aline's interview mentions "sending warm WhatsApp greetings every Monday", "simplifying the lessons not to overload the students' minds", and 'annotating students' productions to keep the motivation on" which pointed to the beginning of both affective and instructional presence. These narratives were summarized using thematic analysis with ChatGPT 4, noting themes including "flexibility," "personal feedback," and "empathy through voice recordings." The phrases were then manually grouped in NVivo 12 Plus using free-coding to code sections identified as pertaining to relational scaffolding, asynchronous emotional cues, and adaptive feedback. Similar codes were used for the teacher journals and the FGD transcripts, with terms such as "digital exhaustion", "collaborative coping," and "student voice through reflection" used to bring forward preliminary themes. The immersion in these narratives allowed for the setting of the foundations for coding in later stages of the analysis.

Based on the rich thematic analysis compiled from multiple teacher interviews, here's a hierarchical mind map-style table that visualizes how the themes emerged and how their associated codes (sub-themes) are organized. Table 3.5 shows how each theme is supported by multiple codes, reflecting the nuanced strategies teachers used during emergency remote learning.

Table 3.5 Emergent Themes and Associated Codes

Main Theme	Associated Codes / Sub-Themes
1. Designing & Organizing Virtual Classes	- Use of Google Classroom, WhatsApp, Zoom, Google Sites, Simplified curriculum, Modular lesson planning, Clear instructions and scaffolding, Flexible deadlines and submission formats, Icebreakers and introductions,

	Bilingual instruction strategies
2. Facilitating Discourse	- Zoom breakout rooms and WhatsApp group chats, Peer-to-peer feedback and correction, Group leaders for monitoring, Real-world discussion prompts, Respectful communication and netiquette, Games and polls to initiate dialogue
3. Direct Instruction	- Modeling pronunciation and grammar, Visual aids (charts, timelines, infographics), Real-life examples and analogies, Scaffolding complex concepts, Templates for writing tasks, Immediate feedback during synchronous sessions
4. Student Engagement & Motivation	- Personalized content (e.g., K-pop, anime, Interactive activities (quizzes, games), Positive reinforcement and praise, Participation incentives, Friendly competition, Journaling and reflection
5. Feedback & Assessment	- Detailed feedback via Google Classroom, Simplified rubrics, Revision cycles, Google Forms for quizzes, Peer feedback, Monitoring progress through group leaders
6. Supporting Struggling Students	- One-on-one outreach via WhatsApp, Flexible deadlines, Extra assignments, Parent collaboration, Emotional support and encouragement
7. Building Higher-Order Thinking (HOTS)	- Critical analysis of real-world issues, Encouraging multiple perspectives, Problem-solving tasks, Guided reasoning and reflection, Debates and open-ended questions
8. Ensuring Knowledge Retention	- Repetition across lessons, Review questions, Practical applications, Scaffolding and spiral learning, Independent practice
9. Leveraging Technology	- Use of Google Classroom, Zoom, YouTube, Recorded lessons and asynchronous tools, Troubleshooting tech issues, Gradual tech adoption, Low-bandwidth alternatives
10. Emotional Support &	- Empathetic communication, Casual check-ins, Creating safe spaces, Encouraging effort over perfection, Humor and

Human Connection	storytelling
11. Parental Involvement	- Parents as communication bridges, Monitoring student progress, Reinforcing schedules and deadlines, Emotional and academic support
12. Future of Education / Hybrid Learning	- Blended learning models, Technology as a complement to face-to-face instruction, Flexibility and adaptability, Teacher as facilitator, Lifelong learning focus

3. Coding

The author began coding the data by reading transcripts, journals and notes from focus groups. This included labeling segments of significance that were representative of each of the important aspects of teaching presence. Codes included descriptive codes such as “providing detailed feedback” or “use of Google Classroom” , and inferential codes such as ‘scaffolding learning’ , ‘maintaining emotional connection’ . For instance, the transcript line “I give students structured feedback using rubrics and I show them how to revise their work” in Melani’s transcript was first assigned both the “feedback clarity” (descriptive) code and the “formative support strategy” (inferred) code.

Following the initial coding process, the researcher conducted focused coding, which clusters codes and refines them based on their relevance to the research questions. Codes that were high frequency and or conceptual were grouped into larger categories. The data fell into three main categories: course design and organization, discourse facilitation, and direct instruction, with a number of subcategories within each. For example, “I used breakout rooms for peer collaboration and let them report findings as a team” from Sandro would be coded into the theme of Facilitating Discourse and “peer interaction” and “small group management.” This process ultimately produced 32 sub-categories, including scaffolded grammar, visual aids, and peer feedback.

NVivo 12 Plus played a role in coding and visualizing the themes within all data sources. It had facilities for both automatic and manual coding. The text search function allowed the researcher to identify patterns such as instances in which the words “feedback,” “group work,” or “scaffolding” were used in the transcripts. The auto-coding function of the software coded large excerpts of text with keywords that pertained to teaching strategies for quickly clustering the data. For example, the auto-code “I use quizzes and games to keep students interested” (Marsya) fell under the auto-code “student engagement”, which formed the basis of the cluster Engagement Strategies.

ChatGPT was utilized in the early and some of the mid-stages of coding to propose other possible categories and to verify that I was detecting thematic saturation. The program brought to the surface patterns or themes found in portions of teacher narratives that might have otherwise been overlooked. For instance, when inputting Edward’s story about “motivation among students with culturally relevant topics such as K-pop”, ChatGPT offered a set of codes including “contextual engagement” and “learner interest alignment” that led the researcher to think of other similar entries in other transcripts.

Figure 3.7 “Radial Structure of Teaching Presence Themes” below is an example of a thematic map taken from the data illustrating the interconnected structure of teaching presence during emergency remote learning, built from NVivo coding and refined via ChatGPT interpretation.

Central node: “Teaching Presence Strategies”

Color-coded branches:

● Course Design & Organization

● Facilitating Discourse

● Direct Instruction

● Engagement & Motivation

● Feedback & Assessment

● Supporting Struggling Students

● HOTs

● Knowledge Retention|

◆ Technology Integration

♥ Emotional Connection

● Parent Collaboration

● Future-Oriented Reflections

Figure 3 7 Radial Structure of Teaching Presence Themes

4. Theme Development:

Theme construction was the process of finding patterns within the coded data that was meaningful and relevant to the research questions that guided the study. The themes were designed to be distinct but connected, each being an important element of teaching presence in a time of emergency remote learning. These were then filtered using criteria of consistency, uniqueness, and theoretical relevance.

Examples from the data: The phrase from Monica’s interview transcript, “I used song lyrics like ‘I will come if you call me’ to help students understand conditional clauses in grammar,” was first assigned to the codes “grammar

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instruction” and “use of multimedia”. Through the process of focused coding followed by comparative analysis, this pedagogical tool of frequent deployment – content connected to difficult grammatical forms—associated within a category of Engaging in Direct Instruction, more specifically, under the sub category of Contextualized Grammar Teaching. The recurrence of this theme is evidenced also in the fact that multiple teachers refer to the same approaches across transcripts.

Function of NVivo The NVivo 12 Plus presentation of nodes and sub-nodes as trees and coding stripes helped in the formation of themes . For example, the entirety of “interactive feedback”, “pronunciation modeling”, and “scaffolded grammar” were classified within the parent node, Direct Instruction Strategies. This structure also helped the researcher to ensure that the themes were emerging consistently with the created structure of the interviews and journals.

ChatGPT’s Involvement Following the first construction of themes, ChatGPT helped to fine-tune the process by proposing subtle variations in wording of codes. For instance, in Marsya’s excerpt “I always start with modeling pronunciation, then give each student a chance to try” , ChatGPT suggested the sub theme Pronunciation Scaffolding, which referred to support rather than simply modeling technique. This realization later in the analysis caused the researcher to code the data differently, creating slight variations in theme with Instructional Modeling versus Pronunciation Scaffolding.

5. Narrative Inquiry Specifics:

The use of narrative inquiry in this study meant the researcher was interested in how teachers “storied” their lived experiences while teaching in emergency remote teaching. This included looking at how they articulated their path, challenges, approaches and changes over time. One of the process was to look at each narrative in terms of plot development, teacher role (facilitator, innovator, emotional narrative), and turning points in their decision-making.

For example, in Monica’s story she stated, “At first I felt like I was just sending materials into the void. But when students began to journal back I

realized I was definitely not alone in this.” One of the participants described it as a watershed moment for her character in terms of moving from a place of solitude to being in relationship. There were several excerpts that mapped the emergence of Monica as an emotional facilitator rather than simply a deliverer of content.

Using NVivo 12 Plus, these pieces of narrative were able to be coded by time period (e.g. “early pandemic,” “mid semester adjustment,” “post reflection”) and semi-constructed role labels (e.g. “teacher as innovator,” “teacher as emotional support”). The temporal coding strips and the hierarchical nodes used in the software permitted the researcher to track the development of each teacher’s story over time.

One example from the data: in Sandro’s transcript, one of the lines reads: “I started recording lessons because students said they couldn’t join live”. “It felt like it wasn’t personal, but it gave them access” coded under “access equity” and “teacher as adaptive innovator.” NVivo’s timeline function was useful in displaying Sandro’s movement from synchronous idealism to asynchronous pragmatism within his narrative.

ChatGPT was employed to highlight implicit narrative structures and propose new interpretations of significant events. The tool was used to assist the researcher in picking out emerging metaphors, shifts in emotional tone, or changes in roles that may have otherwise been missed by providing some selected snippets.

For instance, when Edward states, “I used K-pop themes to get students talking-it wasn’t about grammar anymore, it was about connection” and then, “K-pop themes, ChatGPT interpreted the phrase as “pedagogical intimacy through cultural resonance”. This prompted the same researcher to have a second look at close excerpts and recode them under a new subtheme; “contextual engagement as emotional bridge”.

6. Refinement of Themes:

In order to maintain thematic integrity, the researcher then

systematically reviewed all of the coded data to ensure that the identified themes reflected the participant's meanings and were relevant to the research questions of the study. Themes were then split, merged and at times discarded through an iterative process based on similarity, emergence, and clarity of the themes.

For instance, the theme of "Feedback Strategies" originally encompassed a variety of practices including rubric use, corrections via WhatsApp, and peer review. Yet, these differed in emotional and relational quality from grammar pointing via WhatsApp (Wulan) and grammar feedback via the use of emojis (Monica), which the researcher later concluded. The newly categorized excerpts were divided into a new theme: "Emotional Feedback Practices", while rubric-based and revision-centered techniques were retained within "Formal Assessment Techniques". This distinction helped to differentiate feedback with pedagogical intent from feedback with affective intent.

NVivo 12 Plus was instrumental in the management and reconfiguration of themes. By its node managing mechanics, the researcher combined nodes that had a common basis, and divided nodes with sub-themes going into different directions. The use of NVivo coding comparison queries and coding stripes helped to visualize similarities and differences.

Sample from the data: The node "Student Engagement" originally incorporated motivational strategies and cognitive scaffolding. NVivo's matrix query showed that printed board games (Marsya) and K-pop reviews (Melani) were grouped apart from grammar tasks with scaffolding (Monica). Accordingly, the investigator divided the node labeled "Engagement" into "Affective Engagement" and "Cognitive Engagement", enhancing thematic specificity.

ChatGPT was leveraged to validate and iterate upon themes by proposing alternative interpretations and revealing emergent patterns. It proposed a nuanced difference in distinction and differentiated thematic clarity through the input of excerpts and preliminary theme labels.

Example from the data: In the case of Edward's quote "I used bilingual

examples to help students understand passive voice," ChatGPT suggested the topic "Linguistic Bridging Techniques" instead of fitting it to the more general "Grammar Instruction." This prompted the researcher to re-categorise similar extracts into a second sub-theme, which instead drew attention to cross-linguistic scalping and developing the thematic structure.

7. Validation:

To establish the credibility of the thematic framework, the researcher systematically tested each theme against the study research questions and aims. This process included ensuring that the themes represented the main pedagogical strategies, emotional elements, and adaptive processes reported by teachers who engaged in emergency remote teaching. Example from the data: The theme "*Facilitating Discourse*" was validated by revisiting excerpts such as Sandro's statement:

"Breakout rooms helped students collaborate and report findings as a team."

This directly addressed the research question on how teachers fostered interaction in virtual environments. Similarly, Monica's quote: *"I encouraged students to respond to each other's journals on WhatsApp."* reinforced the theme's relevance to peer engagement and discourse facilitation.

NVivo 12 Plus provided assistance in validating the results by facilitating report generation and visualisation using coding matrices, hierarchies chart and node comparison queries. These guides allowed the researcher to ensure that each emergent theme was embedded in data from more than one data collection instrument and multiple respondents. Example from the data: A matrix coding query revealed that the theme "*Direct Instruction*" was supported by excerpts from all eight participants, including Edward's line:

"I used bilingual examples to explain passive voice," and Marsya's: *"I modeled pronunciation before letting students try."* NVivo's visualization confirmed that this theme was not only recurrent but also distributed evenly across cases, strengthening its validity.

ChatGPT was used to **critically review the thematic structure**, offering suggestions for refinement based on qualitative research conventions. By analyzing selected excerpts and preliminary theme labels, ChatGPT helped identify potential gaps, overlaps, or emerging sub-themes. Example from the data: When reviewing Melani's quote:

"I contacted parents when students disengaged," ChatGPT proposed the theme *"Parent Collaboration as Engagement Strategy"*, which had previously been nested under *"Supporting Struggling Students."* This led the researcher to elevate *Parent Collaboration* as a standalone theme, enhancing conceptual clarity and alignment with the study's objectives.

8. Writing Up:

The researcher organized the results as a story and expressed the lived experiences of teachers in emergency remote teaching. The write-up interwove vivid quotes from interviews and diaries to depict formative pedagogical techniques, emotional states, and coping techniques. No direct quotes were used to support each theme along with contextual interpretation due to lack of authenticity. Example from the data: To illustrate the theme *"Emotional Feedback Practices,"* Monica's journal entry was included:

"I often use emojis like 🌟 and 😊 when giving feedback—it helps students feel seen and encouraged." This quote was embedded in the findings section to highlight how emotional tone was intentionally crafted through digital feedback, reinforcing the theme's relevance.

NVivo 12 Plus was instrumental in organizing and visualizing the data. It generated word clouds, coding matrices, and thematic maps that clarified the distribution and saturation of themes across participants.

Example from the data: A word cloud generated from all interview transcripts revealed high-frequency terms such as "feedback," "scaffold," "WhatsApp," and "engagement." This visual was included in the findings chapter to demonstrate the linguistic prominence of key teaching strategies. Additionally,

a thematic map created in NVivo showed how “Facilitating Discourse” overlapped with “Emotional & Human Connection,” helping the researcher discuss the fluidity between cognitive and affective teaching presence.

ChatGPT supported the drafting process by suggesting narrative structures, transitional phrasing, and alternative interpretations of coded data. It helped ensure that the writing was both engaging and coherent, especially when integrating multiple voices and perspectives. Example from the data: When organizing the theme “*Parent Collaboration*,” ChatGPT proposed framing it as a bridge between academic and emotional support, based on Melani’s quote:

“I contacted parents when students disengaged—it wasn’t just about grades, it was about reconnecting.” This suggestion led to a more nuanced write-up that emphasized the relational dimension of parental involvement.

Finally, all efforts taken were put together in the interpretation of the research findings. In addition, the interpretations could lead to other important areas such as the implications, research proposals, and conclusions. Marshall & Rossman & Rallis (2016) reminds researchers there will always be different explanations existing within the data. Before moving forward, the researcher should stop and evaluate the findings for other plausible explanations.

Limitations and Delimitations

Kolstoe (2021) reminds researchers that perfect research is a mythical ideal. It means that there is no perfect design for research; there are always compromises. The findings from the analysis could be subject to different interpretations. The study involved nine participants which was appropriate for the research in terms of sample size, it was not sufficiently large to generalize this study. The perspectives reflected in this study are those of the participants observed and interviewed by the researcher.