

Indonesian English Teachers' Work Engagement and Attitudes towards the Use of Instructional Technology: A Survey Study

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Abstract

The present study was conducted to investigate the level of work engagement of Indonesian high school teachers of English and its relationship with their attitudes towards the use of instructional technology (IT) during the Covid-19-driven online instruction. The study employed a survey method of distributing a Google Form questionnaire and 114 teachers participated in the study. It was found that the participants generally reported a high level of work engagement in their English Language teaching (ELT) profession. Though at least 93% of the participants reported their engagement in the profession in all questionnaire items, they seemed to be less sure about their level of engagement in terms of striving for excellence in the profession seen from lower "strongly agree" responses. The present study further found a statistically significant positive relationship between the participants' level of work engagement and their attitudes towards the use of IT during the pandemic-driven online instruction. Their level of engagement could predict a 21.7% variance in their attitudes towards the use of IT. Pedagogical implications include encouraging teachers to use all the experiences they obtained during the pandemic to upgrade themselves as teachers rather than totally 'going back' to the old ways of teaching before the pandemic. Future studies could investigate English teaching as a job and can be conducted qualitatively to see the extent to which teachers' reported engagement is manifested in everyday teaching.

Keywords: Work engagement, attitudes, instructional technology, online learning

INTRODUCTION

In the context of the teaching profession, teachers' engagement has been widely used as an indicator of both teaching quality and the extent of students' engagement in the learning process (Abiodullah et al., 2020; Mäkinen, 2013; Rothstein, 2010). Mäkinen (2013) asserted that teachers who are engaged in the classroom are characterized by transformational teaching where they position themselves as active agents in promoting

meaningful changes in students' lives by creating possible learning environments. Engaged teachers also encourage students to embrace the challenges they encounter during their learning pathway as part of the learning process. Abiodullah et al. (2020) stated that engaged teachers implement innovative ideas to engage students in the learning process and adjust classroom instructions based on the students' needs. They also show enthusiasm for improving teaching pedagogy by being responsible for the students learning process, monitoring students' progress during the learning process, and developing a good teacher-student relationship (Abiodullah et al., 2020). In addition to those characteristics, Burić and Macuka (2018) identified several characteristics of engaged teachers. Engaged teachers are described as teachers who are energetic, enthusiastic about teaching, persistent in encountering challenges during the instructional process, attentive to the students' needs, absorbed in their teaching and administrative work, as well as determined in achieving the learning goals and educational quality for the students (Burić & Macuka, 2018).

A large body of research has been conducted in the area of work engagement (Abiodullah et al., 2020; Bakker et al., 2008; Bakker & Bal, 2010; Burić & Macuka, 2018; Choochom, 2016; Ismayilova & Klassen, 2019; Köse, 2016; Pourtousi & Ghanizadeh, 2020; Schaufeli et al., 2006), suggesting the importance of this topic in the teaching field. Among these studies, some have discussed definitions of work engagement (Bakker et al., 2008; Bakker & Bal, 2010; Ismayilova & Klassen, 2019; Köse, 2016; Schaufeli et al., 2006). Related to this, the present study uses the definition of work engagement proposed by Schaufeli et al. (2006) and Bakker et al. (2008) as it is perhaps the most commonly used conceptualisation (Bakker & Bal, 2010). Schaufeli et al. (2006) and Bakker et al. (2008) asserted that work engagement refers to the fulfilling state of mind characterised by being vigorous, dedicated, and absorbed in the job. Being vigorous is characterised by showing enthusiasm and resilience whilst working as well as persistence in achieving something. Being dedicated is characterised by strong involvement in the job, enthusiasm, and pride in the job. Finally, absorption refers to the state of fully concentrating whilst working, the feeling of being happily immersed in the job, and the feeling of time passing quickly during work.

Concerning the roles of engaged English teachers in providing qualified teaching and engaging students in the learning process, a growing body of research has been conducted on work engagement among English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers (e.g.: Adekola, 2010; Basikin, 2007; Vincent Greenier et al., 2021; Xie, 2021). In their study on work engagement among English teachers at secondary schools, Basikin (2007) in Indonesia and Adekola (2010) in Nigeria shared similar findings of the relatively high work engagement among secondary school English teachers manifested in their being vigorous, dedicated, and absorbed in their job. Further investigation indicated that the dedication dimension was higher than the other two dimensions, i.e., vigorous and absorbed (Basikin, 2007). The finding showed that the English teachers had a high sense of significance, enthusiasm, inspiration, pride and challenge. In addition, the findings of these two studies suggested that the English teachers showed the significance of the work they were doing, felt enthusiastic about their job and inspired by what they were doing, felt proud about the job, and embraced the challenge of their job. In line with this, teachers who are engaged in their work are more likely to experience satisfaction with what they do, feel confident and proud about what they do, and contribute their best efforts to achieve goals at work (Greenier et al., 2021). Xie

(2021) conducted a similar study investigating work engagement and its relationship with emotional regulation and resilience among EFL teachers. The findings showed that engaged teachers were those who received satisfaction from their work and were able to embrace and navigate the difficulties and challenges in their work. Additionally, in Turkey, Saudi Arabia, and Indonesia, studies suggested that their participants viewed the teaching profession as respectable (see Kahraman & Çelik, 2020; Masadeh, 2022; Tanoyo et al., 2017) and this view may also be at play in influencing teachers' engagement in the profession.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, the use of instructional technology (IT) in the instructional process became paramount as the instructional process was shifted from face-to-face mode to online. In such situations, teachers' engagement may very well affect their use of IT for the success of instruction during pandemic-driven online learning. In their study involving 350 secondary school teachers in Spain, Moreira-Fontán et al. (2019) found that one of the factors influencing the higher level of teachers' work engagement was teachers' digital self-efficacy, the ability to learn and use new IT for instructional purposes and this ability comprised of two components, technological competences and pedagogical competences (Moreira-Fontán et al., 2019).

Related to factors influencing the use of IT, though not in teachers' engagement literature, several recent studies have suggested that teachers' use of IT during Covid-19 to facilitate online learning is also affected by several factors (Gómez-Fernández & Mediavilla, 2022; Herawati et al., 2021; Sangeeta & Tandon, 2021). Three factors influencing teachers' decision to use IT during Covid-19 are teachers' characteristics, students' characteristics, and IT resources at school (Gómez-Fernández & Mediavilla, 2022). Concerning teachers' characteristics, teachers who attended IT training from the school or institution where they worked were more likely to use IT in their classes. Students' characteristics also determine teachers' use of IT. In this sense, classes consisting of students who are familiar with and regularly use IT tools affect teachers' decisions in using IT. Finally, the last factor, IT resources at school, determines the teachers' use of IT. The greater access to IT resources, the more likely teachers are to use IT (Gómez-Fernández & Mediavilla, 2022). In a recent study by Sangeeta and Tandon (2021), the findings indicated that the factor influencing teachers' use of IT was performance expectancy. Performance expectancy was closely related to the training about the benefits and usefulness of IT during online learning in the Covid-19 pandemic era.

Furthermore, teachers' use of IT is motivated by a willingness to learn new knowledge, a willingness to try, and a sense of openness (Herawati et al., 2021). A study in an Indonesian context by Herawati et al. (2021) involving 31 teacher participants found that the Covid-19 pandemic raised teachers' awareness to improve their self-quality by learning new knowledge, one of which was using and implementing IT in instruction. The process of acquiring new knowledge in IT was manifested in their willingness to try what they had learned. Herawati et al. (2021) further found that the teacher participants had a sense of openness, were aware of the need to implement IT and had the willingness to continuously update their knowledge to overcome challenges.

Furthermore, teachers' use of IT is important to enhance the quality of the instructional process, especially during the Covid-19 pandemic era. Therefore, it is important to find out the relation between teachers' work engagement and attitudes towards the use of IT during such a period. Despite that, to the best of our knowledge, studies investigating the

relationship between teachers' work engagement and their use of IT, especially in the Indonesian context, may be very rare. Whilst many studies have been conducted on work engagement in the teaching profession outside English Language Teaching (ELT) (e.g.: Abiodullah et al., 2020; Burić & Macuka, 2018; Choochom, 2016; Köse, 2016; Mäkinen, 2013; Man & Hadi, 2013; Minghui et al., 2018; Sarath & Manikandan, 2014; Zeng et al., 2019), work engagement in ELT profession (e.g.: Adekola, 2010; Basikin, 2007; Greenier et al., 2021; Xie, 2021) and work engagement and teachers' use of instructional technology (e.g.: Moreira-Fontán et al., 2019) have received less attention, let alone in the Indonesian ELT context. Hence, it is important to conduct a survey study investigating Indonesian English teachers' work engagement during the Covid-19 pandemic and the relationship between their level of work engagement and their use of IT, deemed very essential during the pandemic-driven online learning. The survey study may produce generalisable data on the relationship between work engagement and IT use in a relatively under-researched Indonesian ELT context.

Based on the rationales, the present study seeks to answer two research questions. First, what is Indonesian high school English teachers' level of work engagement in the ELT profession? Second, what is the relationship between their level of work engagement and their attitudes towards the use of IT during the Covid-19 pandemic driven online learning?

METHOD

The present study employed a quantitative design of distributing *Google Form* questionnaire and involved 114 high school teachers of English from various regions in Indonesia. This study was conducted simultaneously with a quantitative study investigating Indonesian high school English teachers' uses of IT during the online learning driven by the Covid-19 pandemic (Subekti & Kurniawati, 2022), thus both involved the same participants. The questionnaire links were shared on various social media platforms such as *Instagram*, *WhatsApp*, *Facebook*, and *Telegram* through the help of ELT acquaintances residing in various regions in Indonesia. The data were collected from 17 July 2020 until 25 July 2020.

Specifically, the present study used two sets of questionnaires as the instrument. The first set was a questionnaire on English teachers' attitudes towards the use of IT and consisted of 13 items and it became the focus of the preceding quantitative study (see Subekti & Kurniawati, 2022). There were four possible responses to this part of the questionnaire. These were "strongly agree" (5 points) suggesting a very positive attitude, "agree" (4 points), "disagree" (2 points), and "strongly disagree" (1 point) suggesting a very negative attitude (Subekti & Kurniawati, 2022). Two sample statements were "During the pandemic, I feel that the use of instructional technology helps me nurture teacher-student relationships" and "During the pandemic, the use of instructional technology has played an important role in increasing my professionalism as an English teacher." The second set, which was the present study, consisted of nine items on English teachers' work engagement adapted to fit the English teaching context from the original Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES) in the health psychology field (Bakker et al., 2008). The nine items are divided into three categories to facilitate easier data presentation: enthusiasm and enjoyment as English teachers (items 1, 3, and 5), pride and purpose in the profession (items 2, 4, and 6), and striving for excellence in living the profession (items 7, 8, and 9). Four possible responses were available. These responses were "strongly agree" (5 points) indicating a very high

engagement, “agree” (4 points), “disagree” (2 points), and “strongly disagree” (1 point) indicating a very low engagement.

Furthermore, the present study employed at least two ethical principles. First, we, the researchers, did not know the participants residing in various areas in Indonesia. Hence, their participation was voluntary, without coercion, and solely based on their interest, implying the implementation of autonomy (Israel & Hay, 2006). A monetary reward was also given to several selected participants indicating the optimization of beneficence or doing good (Gray, 2014).

In terms of data analysis, upon obtaining the *Google Form* questionnaire data, we downloaded them in an Excel file and moved them to SPSS 24 for further analyses. To answer the first research question, descriptive statistics were employed to obtain data in the form of mean scores and percentages. To answer the second research question, the Pearson correlation formula was employed, correlating the total score of the work engagement questionnaire and that of attitudes towards IT. The sequence of data collection and analysis can be seen in Figure 1.

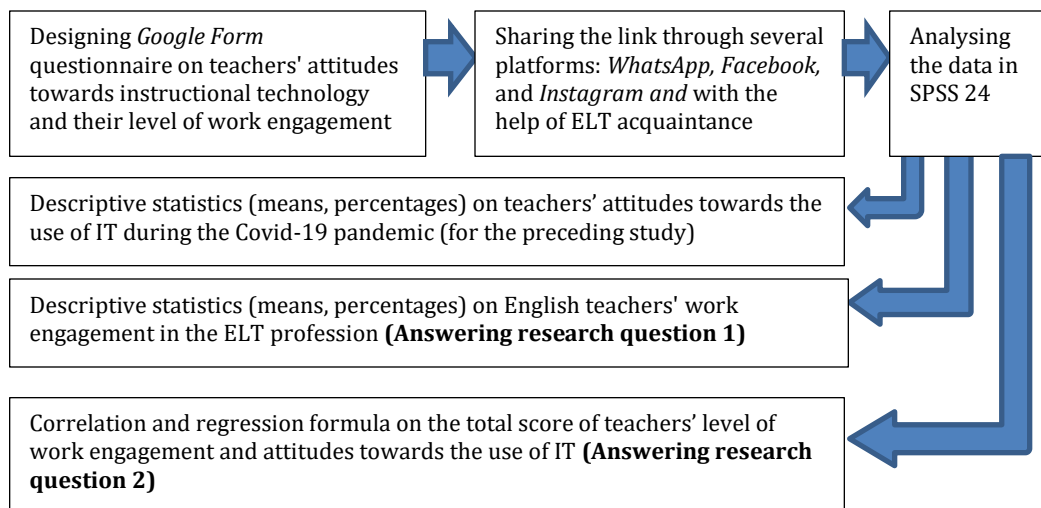


Figure 1. The sequence of data collection and analysis

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

High school teachers' level of work engagement in the teaching profession

The nine questionnaire items on teachers' work engagement had .91 Cronbach's alpha coefficient, indicating high internal reliability.

As mentioned in the Methods section, to facilitate a clearer presentation of data, the nine questionnaire items on the English teachers' work engagement are divided into three categories: enthusiasm and enjoyment as English teachers, pride and purpose in the profession, and striving for excellence in living the profession. Results of the first questionnaire category can be observed in Table 1.

Table 1. Enthusiasm and Enjoyment as English Teachers

Mean Scores	Std. Deviation	Strongly Agree (%)	Agree (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly Disagree (%)	
1. I am enthusiastic about doing my profession as an English teacher.	4.51	.60	54.4	43.9	1.8	0
3. Time goes by so fast when I work or teach English.	4.40	.59	43.9	54.4	1.8	0
5. I feel excited when I work intensively as an English teacher.	4.46	.60	49.1	49.1	1.8	0

As seen in Table 1, the participants generally reported their enthusiasm and enjoyment as English teachers. In all the three statements in this category, only two out of 114 participants (1.8%) expressed their disagreement, with 112 participants (98.2%) endorsing the statements, indicating their enthusiasm and excitement about working as English teachers.

Furthermore, the detailed findings in the second category on pride and purpose in the profession can be seen in Table 2.

Table 2. Pride and Purpose in the Profession

Mean Scores	Std. Deviation	Strongly Agree (%)	Agree (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly Disagree (%)	
2. My English teaching profession is meaningful and full of purposes.	4.52	.55	53.5	45.6	0.9	0
4. My English teaching profession inspires me.	4.46	.60	49.1	49.1	1.8	0
6. I feel proud of my profession.	4.64	.58	67.5	30.7	1.8	0

As seen in Table 2, in line with the findings on the participants' level of enthusiasm and enjoyment of working as English teachers, items in the category of whether they perceived the ELT profession as something to be proud of, giving meaning and purposes also produced very positive responses, indicating a high level of engagement. As seen in item 2, only one out of 114 participants (0.9%) did not agree that the ELT profession was meaningful and full of purposes, with the other 113 participants expressing their agreement that the ELT profession was meaningful and full of purposes. Furthermore, only two participants (1.8%) reported they did not get inspired by their profession in item 4 and they did not feel proud of their profession in item 6, respectively. The findings in the aforementioned three items indicated that more than 98% of the participants had very positive views about the ELT profession. It gave them pride as well as inspired them. Item 6 "I feel proud of my profession" produced the biggest 'strongly agree' responses (67.5%) among all items in the questionnaire. This may indicate that Indonesian teachers of English were proud of their ELT profession.

Moving towards work engagement in terms of whether they reported striving for excellence as English teachers, the detailed findings can be seen in Table 3.

Table 3. Striving for Excellence in Living the Profession

Mean Scores	Std. Deviation	Strongly Agree (%)	Agree (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly Disagree (%)
7. As an English teacher, I have a high level of perseverance.					
4.25	.75	37.7	56.1	6.1	0
8. As an English teacher, I always refrain from giving up even in difficult situations.					
4.32	.66	39.5	57	3.5	0
9. I always try to improve my professional skills as an English teacher.					
4.53	.60	56.1	42.1	1.8	0

From Table 3, it could be seen that all the three items (items 7, 8, and 9) produced generally very positive responses from the participants. 93.9% of the participants reported a high level of perseverance in their job and 96.5% of them always refrained from giving up even in difficult situations in their job. Even more, 98.2% reported they reported that they always tried to improve their professional skills as English teachers. However, items 7 on perseverance and 8 on not giving up produced the lowest “strongly agree” responses at 37.7% and 39.5% respectively. This may indicate that some of the participants were less sure whether they were resilient enough when facing challenges in their job.

Regarding the aforementioned findings on the high level of reported work engagement among the teacher participants, several points could be further commented on. First, they reported that they felt enthusiastic and excited about working as English teachers. They also reported that working as English teachers made them proud and gave them a sense of purpose. These findings may relate to extrinsic and intrinsic factors. The first external factor could be the position of teachers in Indonesian society. In several previous studies in various contexts including Indonesia, this profession has often been seen as a respectable and noble profession (Kahraman & Çelik, 2020; Masadeh, 2022; Tanoyo et al., 2017). The Indonesian government has also given acknowledgement to the teaching profession (Suryani, 2020), for example, by giving professional allowance for all certified teachers (Hasanah & Kristiawan, 2019). Furthermore, as English mastery is considered prestigious among many Indonesian students due to the importance of the language in today’s globalised world (Subekti et al., 2021), the English teaching profession may instil a sense of pride and purpose in teachers. Furthermore, intrinsic factors could also be at play. This could be the teacher participants’ love for the profession nurtured since their teacher education programme (Nue & Manara, 2022; Siahaan & Subekti, 2021) and continually nurtured through daily teaching dynamics. The finding on the very high level of work engagement in teachers was generally in line with the findings of several previous studies (Adekola, 2010 in Nigeria; Basikin, 2007 in Indonesia), suggesting the relatively uniform findings, despite among limited studies, in EFL context on the high level of EFL teachers’ work engagement.

Furthermore, though producing findings on a high level of work engagement, the third category of questionnaire on striving for excellence produced a somewhat lower level of work engagement than the other two categories. This third category also produced the lowest ‘strongly agree’ responses compared to the other two categories. Several teachers, albeit a minority among the participants, even reported that they were not perseverant enough in overcoming challenges and tended to give up in difficult situations. This could be alarming because teachers with low work engagement may negatively affect their students’

learning (Mäkinen, 2013). Several factors could be the causes of these teachers' reported low engagement in terms of striving for excellence. The availability of a sufficient support system could be a cause. For example, in a teaching environment where teachers obtain sufficient support in terms of facilities and access to professional development, teachers are likely more able to face challenges (Lie et al., 2020). Related to this, considering the time of data collection, in the midst of 2020, in the height of lockdowns and people's fear of the Covid-19 virus, the teacher participants may also have been struggling to keep instructions going despite all the challenges of working from home and their students' unfamiliarity with online learning. This struggle may have affected their reported perseverance to strive for excellence in teaching during the pandemic. In this case, how individual teachers perceive their profession may also be a key factor. Those who see the profession as an intrinsically noble profession may persevere despite the hardship.

The overall findings suggesting very high work engagement, however, may suggest that the Indonesian high school teacher participants had perseverance in teaching despite the challenges. This finding was in line with the finding of a previous study by Herawati et al., (2021) in Indonesia. They reported that their teacher participants were willing to adapt to the rapid changes due to the pandemic and update their knowledge to overcome challenges. These teachers' high dedication and openness to change should be maintained even in the post-pandemic era. That is to say that the experiences of teaching during the pandemic should enrich teachers for better and more well-prepared instructions onwards so that they do not 'start over' from where they were before the pandemic. In other words, the teaching experiences during the pandemic should facilitate teachers to level up in terms of work engagement in the teaching profession, thus making a better instructional process in the post-pandemic possible.

The relationship between high school teachers' level of work engagement and their attitudes towards the use of instructional technology

The correlation results between teachers' work engagement and attitudes towards the use of it can be observed in Table 4.

Table 4. Teachers' Work Engagement and Attitudes towards the use of IT

	Attitudes towards the use of IT	
Teachers' work engagement	Pearson Correlation	.473**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	114

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

As can be seen in Table 4, the study found a statistically significant, moderate, positive correlation between English teachers' level of work engagement and their attitudes towards the use of IT ($r(112) = .47, P < .01$). It means that the more the teachers were engaged in their work the more positive attitudes they had towards the uses of IT.

Furthermore, Table 5 shows the results of the linear regression formula with the participants' level of work engagement becoming the independent variable whilst their attitudes towards the use of IT becoming the dependent variable.

Table 5. Regression Results with Teachers' Work Engagement as Independent Variable

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square
1	.473 ^a	.224	.217

a. Predictors: (Constant), Work Engagement

As seen in Table 5, the participants' level of work engagement in the ELT profession could predict 21.7% of the variance in their attitudes towards the use of IT. Other variables making the rest 78.3% were not involved in the formula.

Generally, the results are shown in Tables 4 and 5 respectively indicated that the participants' work engagement only moderately associated with their attitude towards the use of IT during the pandemic and accounted for only 21.7% of the variance. Several recent studies suggested that teachers' use of IT was influenced by several factors such as access to IT resources and the teachers' perceptions of their students' familiarity with the IT (Gómez-Fernández & Mediavilla, 2022), prior training or exposure to IT (Moreira-Fontán et al., 2019; Sangeeta & Tandon, 2021), as well as how the teachers perceived their ability in using the IT for the success of instruction (Moreira-Fontán et al., 2019). These aforementioned findings of the previous studies suggesting various factors affecting teachers' use of IT in class may partly explain why the finding of the present study indicated the only moderate influence of the participants' work engagement on their attitudes toward the use of IT. Another factor could be related to the Covid-19-driven online learning practically forcing the use of IT in instructions. Hence, the participants may have ambivalent attitudes towards the use of IT as the use of IT during the pandemic was no longer a choice as in the pre-pandemic setting, but an obligation whether they were prepared for it. Nevertheless, as teachers become more familiar with IT (technological competence) and teaching using IT (pedagogical competence) (Moreira-Fontán et al., 2019) during the pandemic, and thus have higher self-efficacy (Moreira-Fontán et al., 2019), teachers' work engagement may give bigger influence on their use of IT in instructional process in the post-pandemic era where various technological tools are getting more widely used in education settings.

CONCLUSION

The study has several implications. Despite the challenges in teaching during the pandemic, teachers reported high work engagement, and this is a very promising finding to face the post-pandemic era. Rather than totally 'going back' to the old ways of teaching before the pandemic, teachers are encouraged to use all the experiences they obtained in teaching during the pandemic to upgrade themselves as teachers. Their perhaps 'compulsory' exposure to various technological tools during the pandemic-driven online learning could be a starting point to design better instructions for students' more meaningful learning.

There are several limitations of the present study. This study used a single method of distributing questionnaires without using any other methods for triangulation of data. Consequently, the data solely relied on the participants' self-reports. Furthermore, the data collection was conducted around the mid of 2020 when online instruction was relatively a new experience for the teacher participants, and they were struggling to adapt to the abrupt changes. This condition may to a certain extent affect their reported work engagement and attitudes towards IT. That being said, the findings of the present study, though could perhaps

be generalised to a wider population in the Indonesian context, should be viewed within the timeframe of data collection, the early pandemic era.

Informed by the findings and limitations of the study, there are two suggested directions for future studies. It could be worthwhile to investigate the English teaching profession as a job. Studies investigating such variables as salaries, workplace conditions, schedules, and career paths affect their work engagement as well as the way the teachers teach. Furthermore, investigating English teachers' work engagement in a qualitative study employing in-depth interviews and observations could potentially shed light on how their reported engagement is manifested into actions in everyday teaching.

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APPENDIX

Appendix 1. Statements on the questionnaire about the attitude toward the use of IT (Subekti & Kurniawati, 2022)

1. During the pandemic, I have the pleasure of learning new things related to instructional technology for English teaching.
2. During the pandemic, the use of instructional technology for English language learning makes me feel overwhelmed.
3. During the pandemic, I use overly simple instructional technology.
4. To be honest, my efforts in providing online learning have been optimal
5. During the pandemic, the use of instructional technology makes learning effective.
6. I feel confident in using instructional technology to teach English.
7. The use of instructional technology in online learning has brought positive changes to the way I teach.
8. I feel that I have found more success stories than failures in the use of instructional technology during online learning in English class.
9. I am exploring various kinds of technological tools to support me in teaching English online.
10. The use of instructional technology during the pandemic helps me motivate my students in learning.
11. During the pandemic, I feel that the use of instructional technology helps me nurture teacher-student relationships.
12. During the pandemic, the use of instructional technology has played an important role in increasing my professionalism as an English teacher.
13. During the pandemic, the use of instructional technology has made me more creative and innovative.