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Learning from Experience in the Midst of COVID-19: Benefits, Challenges, and Strategies in Online Teaching

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Abstract

The onset of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) during the winter of 2020 presented challenges for education including transferring courses online, which gave experienced online lecturers an inherent advantage over their less tech-savvy counterparts. Online teaching poses challenges and affords opportunities for EFL instructors who rely on live communication for pronunciation and speech lessons. To help newcomers overcome the steep learning curve associated with computer-assisted language learning (CALL), this study maps expected benefits, challenges, and strategies of implementing an online EFL course among teachers with different levels of online teaching experience. A group of 43 EFL university instructors teaching communication courses in South Korea completed a survey measuring benefits and challenges for teachers, benefits, and challenges for students, communication channels, and activity types. Analysis of variance across no-, low-, and high-experience groups revealed several findings. Key differences between experience level included expected challenges for instructors and activity choice. Those with online teaching experience perceived fewer obstacles and used a wider array of communication channels and activities when doing so. All groups reported similar levels of expected benefits for instructors and teachers and challenges for students. The most popular benefits, challenges and strategies, and differences between the no- and high-experience groups are discussed and recommendations for future teacher training are given.

*Keywords***:** English language learners, online teaching, EFL, COVID-19, computer-assisted language learning, online teaching strategies, teacher training

Introduction

In March of 2020, the Ministry of Education in South Korea was urgently tasked with providing guidelines for universities to reduce the spread of the novel coronavirus, COVID-19 (Bahk, 2020c). The most logical response was to implement fully online classes for at least part of the semester. This led to anxiety and frustration among some English language instructors unaccustomed to online teaching. Furthermore, university students complained early on about the lack of school preparation for online instruction (Bahk, 2020b). Beginning February 27th, 2020, the Association of Students Council

network surveyed 12,213 students (Bahk, 2020a). Results of the survey indicate that 83.8% of students wanted a tuition reduction or refund from their universities, some mentioning that online learning was inferior to face-to-face classes (as cited in Bahk, 2020a). At the time of this writing, a few universities already agreed to implement fully online learning for the remainder of the semester while other universities have decided to take a more gradual approach by delaying the start of on-campus classes and not setting a firm date for returning (Bahk, 2020c).

Several benefits are afforded within an online teaching environment, including studying anywhere at any time, having more time for thinking and response, and increased flexibility in learning (Xiaet al., 2013). The benefits of not having to commute long distances, along with being location-independent, make online education a popular alternative to brick-and-mortar classrooms. Online learning also provides numerous benefits to English language learners who can participate in various asynchronous and synchronous learning activities to improve language proficiency (Fageeh & Mekheimer, 2013). Furthermore, research (e.g., Lin, 2015; Payne, 2020; Wang et al., 2019; Warschauer et al., 1996) indicates that motivation and students' attitudes toward learning can improve through online education. Nevertheless, many instructors have struggled to quickly transform their face-to-face classes to solely online courses, especially without experience in online teaching (Cruickshank, 2020). Language instructors who are new to online teaching face many challenges in implementing courses and those who have less favorable views of technology are likely to have more difficulties (Kessler, 2006; Kessler & Plakans, 2008). For English as a Foreign Language (EFL) courses, newcomers to online teaching must set realistic online teaching goals, avoid common obstacles in online teaching, and learn which online assignment types are appropriate. Online learning uses computer hardware, software, and educational theory and practice to facilitate learning, be it a course supported with an online component. Language instructors are responsible for creating, managing, and creating educational resources to help improve their learners' academic performance (Robinson, 2016), however, some classes are more suitable for online education than others. Conversation classes, or courses that focus on increasing L2 pronunciation skills, may struggle to transfer as well as writing courses for reasons such as the asynchronous nature of writing activities and written corrective feedback.

Moving offline conversation classes to a fully online environment poses several challenges, including finding opportunities for live communication (e.g., video-conference sessions, conference phone calls, or chatrooms), which is one reason why EFL has predominantly been taught by native English speakers in an offline setting. An increasing number of online teaching and learning platforms exist to meet classroom needs, but it is not clear that inexperienced instructors understand how to best navigate them.

South Korea is well known for being a technological powerhouse. Technology use has deeply penetrated South Korean society and the education system. Internationally, South Korea has the highest rate of smartphone usage, with roughly 94% of the population owning a smartphone (Sohn, 2018). Additionally, 96% percent of South Koreans use the Internet daily (Tinmaz & Lee, 2019). Online courses are accessed from a wide range of devices, including computers, smartphones, and tablets. There are also many libraries and Internet cafes throughout the country that students can visit if they do not have personal devices to access the Internet or if they have technical problems.

Student satisfaction, academic performance, and other course outcome measures are influenced by the expectations and teaching strategies adopted early on in developing online courses. In this study, teaching strategies refer to the communication channels and activity choices instructors intend to use when teaching online. Experiential knowledge concerning benefits, challenges, and teaching strategies in the online learning context may provide directions for inexperienced instructors to follow, supporting higher chances for successful online course design and implementation. This study examined benefits, challenges, and teaching strategies in the context of Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL). Our first aim was to identify the relationships among the variables of interest, including online teaching experience and course expectations. Becoming proficient at online teaching entails substantial training with education technology, but how many hours, weeks, semesters, or years of training is unclear. Therefore, the second aim was to determine how levels of online teaching experience influence expectation beliefs for benefits, challenges, and teaching strategies. Our third aim identified individual benefits, challenges, and teaching strategies. These expectations were also compared between EFL instructors with at least two years of online teaching experience and ones without experience. The following research questions were asked:

Research Questions

1. What is the relationship between online EFL teaching experience and online EFL course expectations?
2. How do the number of years of teaching online influence teacher expectations?
3. What are the most significant differences in expectations between instructors with at least two years of online teaching experience and those without online teaching experience?

Literature Review

There are various forms of online learning, including blended (also referred to as hybrid learning) and entirely online. Although there is some ambiguity in terms of how blended learning is defined, it generally involves the combination of face-to-face and computer-based learning (Garrison & Kanuka, 2004; Hrastinski, 2019). Fully online classes use web-based resources and learning management systems for instruction, and face-to-face lessons do not take place (Nakayama et al., 2014). Flipped learning is usually comprised of instructor-made learning resources, primarily videos or other forms of multimedia, prior to the face-to-face classes (Lin & Hwang, 2018). During the face-to-face classes, the students engage in constructive activities that allow them to apply what they learned from the flipped learning resources to the assigned learning activity (Hwang et al., 2019). These online learning methods have been implemented in South Korea (Lee, 2017), Thailand (Tananuraksakul, 2016), Indonesia (Durriyah & Zuhdi, 2018), and Japan (Caldwell, 2018) and have been researched extensively (e.g., Bailey & Judd, 2017; Costley, 2019). However, in the English language learning context in South Korea, fully online classes are not standard, which has led to some concern among language instructors and students who are not accustomed to online learning.

Online teaching methods, including blended, fully online, and flipped learning, are regularly used in the Teaching English as a Second Language (TESOL) field. CALL has been used for language learning since the 1960s (Warschauer & Healey, 1998). Language learning technology continues to transform the TESOL field as myriad educational technology tools and resources are being used across universities and other educational institutions around the world. With the sudden decision to implement a fully online class system at universities in South Korea in light of COVID-19, educators and administrators had to determine which learning management systems, social media platforms, synchronous and asynchronous tools, and other digital resources would be used to ensure effective instruction for English language learners.

Numerous benefits of online teaching for teachers and students are well documented in research. These include improving teaching pedagogy, instruction methods, curriculum design, and language learning (Wang & Vasquez, 2012). Classroom engagement, communication skills, and self-confidence can also improve in an online learning environment; additionally, the learning environment may be convenient for instructors and students (Halim & Hashim, 2019). Implementing online learning activities that are fun and engaging can also increase student motivation (Morat et al., 2016). The use of authentic learning materials like videos, television clips, and other practical sources of multimedia (e.g., YouTube, Wikimedia, Wikipedia, and Spotify), can also aid in the online learning experience (Pazilah et al., 2019). Through surveying 235 Chinese students on their preferred online resources/tools, Gavin (2019) found students practiced listening, reading, writing and speaking through songs, online TV, audio news, video clips, websites, social media, e-books, text chatting, automatic writing evaluation software, voice messages, language learning apps, and video chatting, indicating access and use of information and communication technology.

A primary characteristic of online teaching is that activities can be centered on the needs of learners and improve language learning (Pourhossein Gilakjani, 2014). Arguably, online teachers take on the role of facilitators rather than disseminators of information, which ensures that students are given ample opportunities to participate in class activities and discussions (Riasati et al., 2012). Moreover, most learners are now digital natives (Sohn, 2018) and are well adapted to online interactions. Students proficient in educational technology can benefit from the engagement that online learning provides (Melor et al., 2012). Instructors should choose online learning activities, resources, and tools that ensure that course goals and objectives are being attained.

Although online teaching has a wide range of benefits, there are certainly challenges that must be considered when implementing online classes or learning activities. Digital activities may lead to students being distracted by other online content, which may inhibit their engagement in the class lesson or activity (Melor et al., 2012). In addition, there is the possibility of having technical issues, including audio and video problems (Halim & Hashim, 2019). In terms of language learning, potential barriers to authentic communication opportunities is a limitation (Pazilah et al., 2019). Furthermore, there are problems when using a one size fits all approach to learning, which could restrict participation and classroom engagement (Gillett-Swan, 2017). Course design and planning can be particularly problematic, especially for instructors who are not knowledgeable about online class delivery. According to Gillett-Swan (2017), “The online environment also presents challenges for many academic staff who increasingly require higher levels of technological competency and proficiency on top of their regular

academic workload" (p. 20). Despite the challenges associated with online learning, with a quickly expanding pandemic wreaking havoc around the world, educators and administrators will have to develop innovative solutions based on best practices to ensure that academic learning objectives and goals are being met.

Methods

Overview

This survey study explored expectations for benefits, challenges, and strategies held by EFL university lecturers at three levels of online teaching experience, high (HE), low (LE), and no experience (NE) groups. A snowball sampling technique was used to recruit instructors. The survey measured expected benefits and challenges for instructors, expected benefits and challenges for students, online teaching communication channels, and online assignment choices.

Participants

To research the effects of online teaching experience on web-based EFL courses, 43 EFL university instructors were asked to complete the study survey. All instructors were native English speakers teaching EFL in South Korea. Furthermore, all instructors were teaching a majority (i.e., 50% or more) of English communication courses during the spring 2020 semester, when South Korea ordered universities to delay offline courses and transfer lessons online indefinitely. An English communication course in South Korea typically entails studying second language speaking, writing, listening, and reading skills with a native English speaker, requiring English communication throughout lessons. The survey was administered the week before the first online courses were scheduled to begin, so instructors already began planning how they would implement their online courses.

No distinction is being made here to separate blended teaching from fully online teaching. Conceptually, there is a stark contrast between web-supported courses and fully online courses; however, both involve internet and information technology to replace elements of face-to-face education.

The online teaching experience was parsed into three groups, instructors without experience (n = 19), those with one semester to two years of online teaching experience (n=14), and instructors with more than two years of online teaching experience (n=10). Teacher training and teaching experience were relatively constant throughout groups. Table 1 displays age, gender, and education level for participants in the three groups.

Table 1
Demographic Information for Online Teaching Experience Groups

Age	NE Group N = 19	LE Group N = 14	HE Group N =10
30-39	8	6	4
40-49	8	6	4
> 50	3	2	2
Gender			
Male	10	11	8
Female	9	3	2
Education Level			
Undergraduate	2	0	1
Masters	15	14	4
Ph.D. / Ed.D.	2	0	5

Teacher Expectations Survey

The survey construction took part in two stages. Initially, a list of benefits, challenges, and strategies was collected by two EFL instructors with graduate degrees in educational technology and 10 years of experience teaching university EFL communication courses. Once the original list was completed, two additional educational technology specialists reviewed the survey items. Items with ambiguous wording were discussed and modified to add clarity. For each of the sections (i.e., benefits and challenges to instructors, benefits, and challenges to students, communication channels, and activity choices), the main statement was presented from which a list of options could be chosen. The options for the benefit and challenge sections used a five-point Likert scale (i.e., strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5)) and measured the degree to which the participant felt the option would be a benefit or challenge when teaching online EFL courses. A five-point Likert scale was chosen to provide a middle non-committal response. Items for the communication channels and activity type were rated on a four-point Likert scale and measured how frequently the instructor intended to use the communication channel or activity type in class. These items ranged from undecided (1), some lessons (2), most lessons (3) to every lesson (4). A four-point scale range was used instead of a five-point scale because there was no need for a non-committal response. Instead, participants skipped communication and activity scale items altogether, leaving the choice blank, if they did not expect to use them.

Table 2 displays the section titles. The idiosyncratic nature of benefits, challenges, communication channels, and activity types meant that our list could not fully capture all possible responses; therefore, an open-ended item was added to each category. The participant was asked to write any benefit, challenge or strategy they thought was missing. Each section except for part 6 (online assignments) produced Cronbach alpha scores above .80, indicating strong reliability that items were appropriately grouped. A Cronbach alpha of .671 was just under the recommended cut-off of .70 (Cortina, 1993), but still within more lenient recommendations (Griethuijsen et al., 2014).

Table 2
Survey Categories and Reliability Coefficients

	Benefits and Challenges for the Teacher	**α**
1	For this semester, the expected benefits of teaching online for the instructor.	.887
2	For this semester, the expected challenges with teaching online for the instructor.	.880
	Benefits and Challenges for the Student	
3	For this semester, the expected benefits of online learning for students.	.919
4	For this semester, the expected challenges with online learning for the students.	.858
	Communication Channels and Assignment Choice	
5	What communication channels are you planning to use with your students for the online classes? Choose all that apply.	.821
6	What online assignments are you planning to use with your students? Choose all that apply.	.671

The Procedure and Data Analysis

Participants were initially recruited from three sources and then asked to share the link to the electronic survey with their colleagues. The first source was a Facebook group dedicated to helping foreigners who teach English at universities in South Korea, a second was within a special interest group focused on EFL educational research in South Korea. The third source was members of Korea TESOL (koreatesol.org) that met the research criteria for participation (i.e., EFL university instructor teaching ECS courses in South Korea). Participants completed the survey through Google Forms ©.

The Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS version 24.0) was used for survey analysis. Originally 51 surveys were completed but four were removed due to incomplete answers and four were removed because the survey taker did not meet the inclusion criteria. Initially, descriptive statistics were conducted on the variables of interest. For research question one, the mean score comparison for categories provided details on how participants overall perceived expected benefits, challenges, and teaching strategies. A Pearson correlation was then carried out to determine the relationships among online teaching experience and the study variables. For research question two, a series of one-way sample ANOVAs were conducted on HE, LE, and NE online teaching groups and the statistically significant relationships identified by the Pearson correlation analysis. To answer research question three, only responses by the NE and HE groups were compared. The LE group was omitted to create greater contrast between experience and inexperience. A series of independent *t*-tests were carried out to identify statistically significant differences between category items.

Results

Research question one examines the relationship between online teaching experience and online course expectations. Research question two determines how the number of years teaching online influences teacher expectations in an online teaching environment. Finally, research question three identifies the expectations with the greatest difference between highly experienced online instructors and ones without any online teaching experience.

4.1 What is the relationship between online EFL teaching experience and online EFL course expectations?

Table 1 displays the Pearson correlation and mean score results for the study variables. Mean scores for the expectation categories were first formulated to measure the magnitude of the study variables. This was followed by Pearson correlation to measure their correlation coefficients. Communication channels, activity choices, and challenges for teachers show statistically significant correlations with online teaching experience. Instructors with more online teaching experience expected to use more activities and use them more often than teachers in the no- or low- experience groups. Instructors with online teaching experience intended to use more communication channels (e.g., LMS discussion forums, email, and direct messaging) and a wider array of learning activities (e.g., student blogs, online quizzes, and essay-type activities), but reported to expect fewer challenges when doing so, indicating greater confidence navigating the online teaching environment.

Table 3

Mean Score and Pearson Correlation Analysis for Study Variables

		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	Online Teaching Experience	1						
2	Communication Strategies	.311*	1					
3	Activities	.357*	.415**	1				
4	Benefits to Teachers	.111	.214	.213	1			
5	Challenges for Teachers	-.390**	-.363*	-.365*	-.289	1		
6	Benefits to Students	.036	.199	.210	.699**	-.015	1	
7	Challenges for Students	-.213	-.157	-.123	.031	.535**	.061	1
Mean		1.79	2.14	2.05	3.45	3.43	3.20	3.53
SD		0.80	0.63	0.67	0.81	0.70	0.67	0.63
Skewness		0.41	0.40	1.01	-0.73	-1.03	-0.82	-0.37
Kurtosis		-1.33	-0.35	1.05	1.19	1.03	1.26	0.00

Note. ** = p < .01; * = p < .05 Online teaching experience (none = 1, medium = 2, high = 3); Benefits and Challenge scales, 5-point Likert (SD to SA); Communication channels and activity types, 4-point scale (not at all (1) to most classes (4).

Communication channels and assignment choice revealed moderate mean scores of 2.14 (*SD* = .63) and 2.05 (*SD* = 0.67), respectively, which is in part attributed to the large selection of available communication channels (e.g., LMS, videoconferencing platforms, social media platforms, and smartphone communication apps) and assignment types (e.g., online discussion forums, wikis, video blogs, open- or close-ended quizzes).

Overall, challenges for the teacher showed the most significant relationships with the other study variables. The highest correlation found was shared between benefits for the instructors and benefits for the students ($r = .699$, $p < .001$), indicating teachers who perceive their online teaching experiences to be advantageous have a stronger expectation for student satisfaction with online instruction. Contrarily, instructors expecting online teaching challenges report expected greater challenges for their students ($r = .535$, $p < .001$).

To answer research question one, we explored the relationship with online teaching experience and online course expectations and found that the expected challenge for instructors, communication channels, and activity choice varied with online teaching experience. We now examine how many years of experience are associated with those relationships.

4.2 How does the number of years teaching online influence teacher expectations?

A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) is a statistical procedure used to determine whether there are any statistically significant differences between the means for the three or more groups. Real issues with unequal sample sizes do occur in factorial ANOVA, if the sample sizes are confounded in two (or more) factors. Since a two-way ANOVA) was not used here, unequal sample sizes between the HE (n = 10), LE (n = 14), and NE (n =19) was acceptable.

Table 4 displays separate mean scores for the variables revealing statistically significant correlations, including communication channels, activity types, and challenges for teachers according to NE, LE, and HE groups. A series of one-way ANOVAs were conducted to compare the effect of experience level on communication choice, activity choice, and challenges for teachers. The analysis of variance showed that the effect of experience level on communication channels was significant, F (2, 40) = 3.432, p = 042, η^2 = .146. The next ANOVA showed the effect of experience level on activity choice was also significant, F = (2, 40) = 4.050, p = .025, η^2 = .172. The final ANOVA showed that the effect of experience level on challenges for teachers was significant, F (2, 40) = 5.667, p = .001, η^2 = .221.

Bonferroni post-hoc analysis was carried out to identify if the significance of ANOVA holds true at the pairwise level. For the HE and NE groups and the HE and LE groups, results approached significance but did not meet the .05 threshold. For the activity choice category, pairwise analysis found significant differences between the HE and NE groups (MD = .652, p = .033). ANOVA found the greatest effect size between groups was within the challenges for the teachers' category (η^2 = .221). Post hoc pairwise analysis confirmed this by identifying statistically significant differences between both HE and NE groups (MD = -.767, p = .011) and the HE and LE groups (MD -.777, p = .015), indicating that challenges for teachers were the greatest area of difference for instructors with or without online teaching experience.

According to the one-way ANOVA, one semester to two years of online teaching experience was insufficient for decreasing expected challenges or increasing the expected number of communication channels or activity choices when teaching online. In fact, for the participants in this study, at least two years of online teaching experience was needed to mitigate statistically significant levels of expected challenges.

Table 4

Mean scores analysis for no, low, and high experience groups

	Group	*M*	*SD*
Communication Channel	HE	2.56	0.53
	LE	1.99	0.67
	NE	2.01	0.57
Activity Variation	HE	2.54	0.64
	LE	1.91	0.47
	NE	1.88	0.70
Challenges for Teachers	HE	2.84	0.89
	LE	3.62	0.41
	NE	3.61	0.61

Note. No Experience (NE), n = 21; Low Experience (LE), n = 14; High Experience, n = 10.

Table 5

One-Way ANOVA for Communication, Activities and Challenges for Teachers on Experience Groups

		SS	*Df*	Mean Square	*F*	*p*
Communication Channels	Between Groups	2.411	2	1.206	3.432	0.042*
	Within Groups	14.054	40	0.351		
	Total	16.465	42			
Activity Variation	Between Groups	3.159	2	1.579	4.050	0.025*
	Within Groups	15.210	39	0.390		
	Total	18.368	41			
Challenges for Teachers	Between Groups	4.550	2	2.275	5.667	0.007**
	Within Groups	16.059	40	0.401		
	Total	20.609	42			

Note. ** = $p < .01$; * = $p < .05$

Table 6

Bonferroni Post-hoc Analysis

			MD	*SE*	*p*
Communication Strategies	3	1	0.549	0.232	.068
	3	2	0.575	0.245	.073
Activities	3	1	0.652*	0.244	.033*
	3	2	0.632	0.263	.063
Challenges for Teachers	3	1	-.765*	0.248	.011*
	3	2	-.777*	0.262	.015*

Note. ** = $p < .01$; * = $p < .05$

4.3 What are the greatest differences in expectations between instructors with at least two years of online teaching experience and those without online teaching experience?

For research question three, we compared the individual category items between NE and HE groups. Items for each category and mean scores for the NE and HE groups are displayed in the Appendix. The LE group was excluded from the Appendix because they are assumed to be in the learning phase of online teaching, unlike participants in the HE group and therefore lack experiential knowledge to best justify their expectations.

We begin by exploring benefits for instructors. A series of independent *t*-tests were conducted to determine if the mean difference between HE and NE items were statistically significant. Table 7 provides the list of category items with the greatest mean difference between the HE and NE groups. For expected benefits, collecting assignments had the greatest mean difference between the HE and NE groups. While not statistically significant, grading online assignments and providing feedback revealed contrast between experienced and inexperienced groups with a mean difference of 0.83 and 0.68, respectively. Contrarily, instructors without experience-rated reflecting on teaching methods and collaborating with other teachers higher than ones with experience, and this is supported by the open-ended response for this category, which found instructors without experience were looking forward to learning a new technology (n = 6) and professional development (n = 5).

Challenges for instructors produced the most significant differences in item choice between the HE and NE groups. Independent *t*-tests identified statistically significant differences for several expected challenges as shown in Table 7. Instructors without experience-reported expecting difficulties creating online lessons, setting up computer equipment, learning to use online teaching tools, tracking participation, and providing corrective feedback. In all cases, instructors in the NE group reported heightened challenge expectations compared to the HE. Both groups agree that organizing online meetings (HE, M = 3.80, SD = 1.40; LE, M = .16, SD = 0.83) and helping students with technical problems (HE, M = 3.60, SD = 1.35; LE, M = 4.16, SD = 0.83) would be challenges, while other challenges were reported in the moderate to low range (M = 3.00 to 1.00) for instructors in the HE group.

Table 7

Comparison expectations between the HE and NE groups

		HE Group		NE Group					
		M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*MD*	*t*	*p*	*d*
	Expected Benefits for Instructors								
3	Collecting assignments	4.10	1.20	3.11	1.05	0.99*	2.32	.029	0.88
	Expected Challenges for Instructors							.	
15	Creating online lessons	2.90	1.52	4.11	0.81	-1.21**	2.81	.009	0.99
19	Setting up computer equipment	2.70	1.25	3.95	1.03	-1.25**	2.89	.008	1.10
20	Learning to use new online teaching tools	2.70	1.34	4.32	0.82	-1.62**	4.05	.001	1.45
21	Providing corrective feedback	2.60	1.58	3.63	1.01	-1.03*	2.15	.041	0.77
24	Tracking participation	2.50	1.43	3.68	1.11	-1.18*	2.47	.020	0.92
	Expected Communication Channel								
48	Online discussion forum	2.70	0.95	1.79	1.44	0.91	2.04	.052	N/A
	Expected Assignment Type								

	Choices								
55	Webinar participation	3.38	1.06	2.44	1.26	0.94	1.92	.073	N/A
56	Paragraph/essay writing	3.10	1.20	2.12	0.99	0.98*	2.30	.030	0.90
58	Closed-ended reading quizzes	3.00	0.87	1.76	0.90	1.24**	3.36	.003	1.40
60	Other closed-ended quiz types	2.88	1.25	1.76	1.03	1.12*	2.35	.028	0.98

Note: ** = p < .01; * = p < .05

No statistically significant difference was found for expected benefits or challenges to students. Just the opposite, both groups reported similar levels of expected benefits for students, with the greatest advantage pertaining to extra time to prepare, access to online writing tools, and opportunity for online writing practice. The highest reported expected challenges for students related to self-regulated learning. Instructors in both groups felt that students may have difficulty attending online class meetings, collaborating with peers, and staying focused.

Instructors in the HE group planned to use more communication channels and use them more frequently, however, the difference was not found to be statistically significant. The three channels most widely reported were online discussion forums, email, and video conferences. The wider variety of communication channels reported by the HE group allows for a broader range of activity choices. Through independent *t*-test analyses (see Table 7), we found that HE group members intend to implement more writing assignments and closed-ended question style quizzes. Overall, online teaching experience leads to a greater number of activity types for students that are delivered with more ease as indicated by lower levels of expected challenges by HE members.

Discussion

Findings from this research highlight how experience teaching online influences course expectations. Similarities and differences concerning course expectations between inexperienced and experienced online teachers were revealed, with expected challenges producing the greatest contrast across experience level. Parallels, including expected benefits and challenges for students, were also reported. The findings for research question 1 (What is the relationship between online EFL teaching experience and online EFL course expectations?) present clear relationships between online teaching experience and expectations. Online teaching experience revealed a positive relationship with expected communication channels and activity choice. Teacher awareness and comfort in implementing online learning activities play a critical role in the success of online classes (Kessler, 2006). Novice teachers who are not familiar with online teaching have expressed frustration with e-learning and other computer-based classroom activities. Instructors without any online teaching experience lack first-hand knowledge of how communication occurs, and the types of activities made possible through that communication when teaching, and this lack of insight contributed to the heightened levels of expected challenges in the no- and low-experience groups.

Similar expectations for benefits and challenges to students was reported across the no-, low-, and high-experience groups. While expectations for student-gains exist, they were not enough to motivate prior CALL training by the no-experience group. Instead, administration intervention brought on by a pandemic, the novel coronavirus, was the driving force for instructors in the NE group to begin learning CALL. This was further

evident in the reported degree of expected benefits for instructors. Both groups recognized similar levels of expected benefits but only the LE and HE groups sought out CALL training. Technology plays a critical role in modern education, and language instructors need to take on an increased role in developing knowledge and skills to more effectively use online learning resources in the classroom (Hegelheimer, 2006; Levy & Stockwell, 2006; Tinmaz & Lee, 2019; Zonoubi et al., 2017). Through this hastily devised educational plan to quickly reduce the impact and spread of COVID-19, educators have been exposed to new online resources and activities that can be effectively used in future face-to-face classes as blended, flipped or entirely online learning programs.

The findings from research question 2 (How do the number of years teaching online influence teacher expectations?) determined the effect actual years teaching have on expectations. Teachers expand their skills as experience grows and their expectations consequently change (Hashweh, 2003). Differences in expectations for challenges to teachers, communication channels, and activity choice were statistically significant after two years of online teaching experience. These findings of higher levels of expected challenges align with more perceived obstacles among inexperienced teachers (Parson et al., 2017). Instructors with less online teaching experience perceive more potential obstacles when teaching, and for online teaching, this heightened level of expected challenges was evident during the early period of building experience (i.e., one semester to two years).

The decrease in perceived obstacles is partly attributed to the use of more activity choices and an increased number of communication channels to deliver those activities. Successful online EFL instructors are recommended to have skills in planning and managing collaboration, designing appropriate activities, and choosing the right environment and appropriate tools. The International Society for Technology in Education (2020) provides myriad guidelines and standards for instructors in different fields to more effectively implement technologically-based learning objectives and goals. These standards center on educator learning, leading, citizenship, collaboration, design, facilitation, and analysis. EFL instructors should ensure that they are regularly participating in professional development and increasing their knowledge of educational technology. Open-ended responses from instructors in the NE group made general statements concerning educational technology such as, “I am going to gain technology proficiency,” “I will learn new education tools,” and “I will use technology in the classroom.” Instructors in the HE group were much more specific in their open-ended responses with statements such as, “I hope that the students will view the activities favorably,” “I plan on making worthwhile teaching videos,” and “I will save time by uploading the same video-lesson for multiple classes which will provide time to look at homework and assignments.” While anecdotal, statements like these provide some insight into the divide in conceptual understanding between instructors in the NE and HE groups. Instructors in the NE group had no first-hand experience with the responsibilities involved with online teaching, and this may have contributed to misconceived, even naïve, perceptions held by NE group members before beginning their online courses.

Instructors in the HE group utilized a wider selection of activities, affording them more opportunities for differentiated instruction. Many of the activities reported by instructors in the high-experience online teaching group entail student to student collaboration (e.g., online discussion forums). Learning that occurs through websites that facilitate collaboration can be partly explained by Vygotsky’s sociocultural theory (1978)

and Bandura's socio-cognitive theory (1986). Through interactions, learners can solve problems, model correct language use, and become aware of knowledge-gaps. This awareness of knowledge-gaps contributes to second language acquisition (Swain, 2001). Instructors also strove to focus on the diverse learning needs of students by using a wider selection of activities, which better prepares them to meet different needs. Through experiential knowledge, instructors have heightened confidence when administering such types of activities over a wider variety of communication channels.

EFL instructors new to language learning technology are recommended to begin integrating educational technology into their offline classes. They can begin by exploring the activities and communication channels described in this study (see Appendix). Moreover, there are an abundance of language learning apps (www.memrise.com, www.duolingo.com, and www.babel.com) podcasts (www.eslpod.com, www.allearsenglish.com, and www.teacherluke.co.uk), YouTube channels (www.youtube.com/user/rachelsenglish, www.youtube.com/user/dailydictation, and www.youtube.com/user/MinooAngloLink/), language exchange websites (www.italki.com, and www.verbling.com), reading practice websites (www.breakingnewsenglish.com, www.englishpage.com, and www.usingenglish.com) available online. Resources like these can be used in class and shared with students to help support the online language learning experience.

Benefits from online teaching confidence were highlighted through Barton and Haydn's (2006) survey study that recognized the importance of experience with information and computer technology on course outcomes. However, instructors reported that a considerable amount of time and resources spent on preparing CALL resources and materials were not helpful. According to Ernest et al. (2013), "The correct activity choice depends on the learning objectives of the task, learners' proficiency in using the tools, availability for group work, and learners' experience" (p. 329). By implementing collaborative learning activities and creating activities that center on students' learning needs, instructors can better ensure that students are achieving course objectives and improving language proficiency.

The findings from research question 3 (What are the greatest differences in expectation between instructors with at least two years of online teaching experience and those without online teaching experience?) describe the individual category items that showed the greatest difference between teachers with online teaching experience and ones without experience. The most popular expectations reported by the two groups are also identified. Direct quotes from the open-ended items are used to help interpret these results.

Expected Benefits and Challenges for Instructors. The NE group reported benefits to professional development with statements such as "becoming more familiar with technology," "improved knowledge and capabilities," and "more experience [is] good to put on our CVs." The most popular benefits for the instructor are grading, providing feedback, and collecting assignments, with one teacher reporting, "I think I will be able to track how students are using the resource a bit better". The most-reported challenges are online meetings and helping students with technical problems. Some LE group members felt challenged by having to use online teaching tools, with one teacher stating, "I don't look forward to dealing with technology" and another expressing concern about their university's learning management system failing to operate. Instructors should be actively participating in professional development to increase their knowledge of

educational technology. Universities can offer support by providing specific training programs to help improve technological proficiency for language instructors (Kessler, 2006). Educators also need to be reminded that they are not expected to be technology experts but rather be knowledgeable about how to effectively use technology in the classroom (Peters, 2006).

Expected Benefits and Challenges for Students. Expected benefits for students had time to prepare answers, using online writing tools (e.g., Google Translate and Grammarly), and practicing writing. However, one instructor reported online translators an overall challenge because students "become lazy," indicating an emerging topic of debate in the ESL/EFL teaching community. Machine translation will continue to improve and this continues to influence writing instruction in EFL classrooms. For instance, a repeated-measures study of three Chinese university students found that Google Translate (www.translate.google.com) helped students increase fluency and decrease writing mistakes (e.g., spelling, grammar, and word choice) at a statistically significant level (Tsai, 2019). Exactly how these benefits to writing quality impact second language acquisition is a subject for future research.

Expected challenges for students include collaborating with other students, attending online meetings, and students becoming distracted. The NE group expects challenges with organizing online meetings with their students, which was expressed through statements like, “no student engagement” and “getting students to pay attention.” To address some of these challenges and to gain more insight into projected benefits, instructors can engage in online teacher development through various social media platforms or online learning communities (Ernest et al., 2013).

Popular Activity Choices. The online discussion forum was the most popular communication channel reported by the HE group and only point of significant difference within the activity choice category between the NE and HE groups. While not statistically significant, HE group members reported to use a wider variety of communication channels and use them more often. HE group members reported using 12 of the 14 activity choices at least once in most lessons while the opposite was found for instructors in the LE group. Online discussion forums, email, and video conferences were the most popular communication channels instructors expect to use. The most popular assignment choices were webinar participation, paragraph or essay writing activities, video recording activities, and closed-ended quizzes, especially reading quizzes. In all four activity types, LE group members reported in the never (1) to rarely (2) use range. Lack of online teaching experience is strongly associated with fewer planned online activity types. Fewer EFL activities may limit communication opportunity and this can negatively impact course outcomes, leaving inexperienced instructors at a disadvantage.

Conclusion

Instructors across South Korea were thrust upon the online teaching stage, allowing the comparison of expectations between teachers with and without online teaching experience. Other serious local, regional, national, and international crises may occur in the future, and educators need to develop online learning contingency plans to mitigate any anticipated educational challenges. Several key findings were uncovered from this research due to the unique situation brought on by the coronavirus pandemic. When

returning to the face-to-face classroom, instructors can consider integrating blended learning activities in the classroom to further support and supplement regular lessons. Having an online component in a traditional, face-to-face class should make the transition to fully online learning more successful if needed for another future crisis.

Surfacing from this study was that instructors with experience teaching EFL online use a wider array of online teaching activities and expect fewer challenges during the process. Students benefit from having an experienced CALL teacher because "knowledge is created through the transformation of experience" (Kolb, 1984, p. 38). Teachers with experience teaching online can act as a guide for the colleagues and a role model for their students. Online teaching experience transforms instructors. Over time, instructors develop more CALL teaching strategies for applying teaching knowledge in practice as system designers and course facilitators (Yang & Kua, 2020).

EFL instructors with no online teaching experience should increase their knowledge of online teaching communication channels. A more diverse approach to communication allows for a broader spectrum of activity choices and more types of activities cater to more language learning styles (Tai, 2013) and strategies (Oxford, 2011). A combination of asynchronous and synchronous channels was reported by HE group members. Not only did HE members report to use more communication channels, but they plan to use them more often in the LE group. This trend was even more evident with assignment types. Instructors without experience are recommended to begin with LMS discussion forums and closed-ended quizzes.

Expectations are grounded in experiential knowledge allowing instructors with online teaching experience to make accurate predictions of how future courses will manifest based on their past semesters. Teaching and class expectations are less precise if grounded in supposition, and consequently more likely to lead to misaligned online curriculum and course design. False expectations may cause negative impressions by students, resulting in poor learning outcomes and low course satisfaction.

Due to the timely nature of this study during the COVID-19 pandemic of 2020, it was essential to conduct the research quickly. It would have been beneficial to obtain more survey responses from participants teaching at a wider range of universities. Moreover, it would have been advantageous to conduct additional interviews and online focus groups with members of the three primary groups based on experience levels. Future research can expand on this study by examining the attitudes and perceptions of online ESL instructors regarding online teaching after the commencement of the spring semester of 2020. Obtaining data on the benefits and challenges of online teaching during the sudden COVID-19 would also be valuable for teachers and administrators who are seeking to create mitigation plans for future crises. Additionally, follow-up research could determine if instructors plan to adapt to any of their future face-to-face classes in light of their new experiences using online teaching methods.

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Appendix

Survey Items with Mean Scores and Standard Deviations for HE and NE Groups

		HE Group		NE Group		
Item	Item	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*MD*
Expected Benefits for Instructors						
1	Grading online assignments	4.20	1.03	3.37	1.26	0.83
2	Providing feedback	4.10	0.88	3.42	1.26	0.68
3	Collecting assignments	4.10	1.20	3.11	1.05	0.99*
4	Messaging students	3.90	1.20	3.42	1.30	0.48
5	Facilitating online discussions	3.70	1.42	3.42	1.26	0.28
6	Managing grades	3.60	0.97	3.05	1.31	0.55
7	Sharing lecture material	3.40	1.51	3.37	1.07	0.03
8	Reflecting on teaching methods	3.22	1.72	3.89	0.96	-0.67
9	Creating teaching portfolio	3.00	1.33	3.26	1.28	-0.26
10	Collaborating with other teachers	2.80	1.62	3.42	1.07	-0.62
Expected Challenges for Instructors						
11	Organizing online meetings	3.80	1.14	4.16	0.83	-0.36
12	Helping students with technical problems	3.60	1.35	4.37	0.83	-0.77
13	Collaborating with other teachers	3.00	1.15	3.00	1.25	0.00
14	Following school guidelines	3.00	1.49	3.84	0.96	-0.84
15	Creating online lessons	2.90	1.52	4.11	0.81	-1.21**
16	Responding to student messages	2.90	1.37	3.11	1.20	-0.21
17	Sharing online content with administration	2.90	1.29	3.37	1.16	-0.47
18	Students complaining about grades	2.80	1.48	3.63	1.12	-0.83
19	Setting up computer equipment	2.70	1.25	3.95	1.03	-1.25**
20	Learning to use new online teaching tools	2.70	1.34	4.32	0.82	-1.62**
21	Providing corrective feedback	2.60	1.58	3.63	1.01	-1.03*
22	Avoiding copyright infringement	2.60	1.58	3.21	1.40	-0.61
23	Taking attendance	2.60	1.35	3.05	1.31	-0.45
24	Tracking participation	2.50	1.43	3.68	1.11	-1.18*
25	Grading online assignments	2.50	1.27	3.11	1.05	-0.61
26	Creating online quizzes	2.40	1.51	3.21	1.08	-0.81
Expected Benefits for Students						
27	Having time to prepare answers	4.30	1.25	3.95	1.08	0.35
28	Using online translators (e.g., Google Translate)	3.90	1.29	3.53	1.43	0.37
29	Practicing writing	3.90	1.20	3.58	1.17	0.32
30	Online research resources (e.g., Google, Wikipedia, etc.)	3.60	1.26	3.47	1.22	0.13
31	Creating English content (e.g., text, audio, video, etc.)	3.60	1.26	3.58	1.07	0.02

32	Receiving instructor feedback	3.60	1.26	3.47	1.02	0.13
33	Submitting assignments	3.50	1.27	3.37	0.90	0.13
34	Builds confidence sharing English content	3.40	1.26	3.21	1.13	0.19
35	Participating in online discussions	3.40	1.51	2.95	1.31	0.45
36	Providing peer-to-peer feedback	3.40	1.43	2.42	1.26	0.98
37	Using online corrective feedback websites (e.g., Grammarly)	3.30	1.06	3.53	1.43	-0.23
38	Practicing reading	3.30	1.16	3.79	1.13	-0.49
27	Creating online portfolios	3.30	1.25	3.00	1.20	0.3
28	Messaging the instructor	3.20	1.14	3.84	0.83	-0.64
29	Practicing grammar	3.10	0.99	3.26	1.05	-0.16
30	Practicing vocabulary	3.10	1.10	3.47	1.07	-0.37
31	Participating in group projects	3.10	1.37	2.26	1.28	0.84
32	Excitement with online teaching	3.00	1.41	2.47	1.22	0.53
33	Practicing listening	2.70	1.16	3.47	1.07	-0.77
34	Practicing speaking	2.60	1.07	2.26	1.28	0.34
Expected Challenges for Students						
35	Online collaboration with other classmates	4.00	0.67	3.79	1.08	0.21
36	Attending online meetings	3.90	0.88	4.26	0.65	-0.36
37	Lack of self-regulated learning	3.70	1.06	3.74	1.24	-0.04
38	Students are easily distracted	3.60	1.07	4.32	0.89	-0.72
39	Learning new software	3.60	0.97	3.74	0.93	-0.14
40	Creating English content (e.g., text, audio, video, etc.)	3.50	1.27	3.47	1.12	0.03
41	Completing online activities on time	3.40	1.51	3.68	0.95	-0.28
42	Helping peers with technical problems	3.00	0.94	3.89	0.99	-0.89
43	Setting up computer equipment	3.00	0.94	3.74	0.99	-0.74
44	Receiving corrective feedback	3.00	1.05	3.37	1.07	-0.37
45	Responding to messages from the instructor	2.90	1.52	2.95	1.03	-0.05
46	Increases anxiety sharing English content	2.70	1.16	3.37	1.07	-0.67
47	Sending messages to the instructor	2.20	1.23	2.84	0.83	-0.64
Expected Communication Channel						
48	Online discussion forums (e.g., LMS discussion forum)	2.70	0.95	1.79	1.44	0.91
49	Email	2.00	1.41	1.11	1.20	0.89
50	Group video conference	2.00	1.25	1.16	1.30	0.84
51	Class Facebook group	1.40	1.51	0.53	1.07	0.87
52	One-to-one text messaging	1.30	1.25	0.79	1.08	0.51
53	One-to-one video conference	1.20	1.32	0.42	0.77	0.78
54	One-to-one voice conversation	1.10	1.29	0.84	1.07	0.26
Expected Assignment Type Choices						
55	Webinar participation (video-conference)	3.38	1.06	2.44	1.26	0.94
56	Paragraph or essay structure writing	3.10	1.20	2.12	0.99	0.98**
57	Student video recordings	3.00	1.15	2.42	1.07	0.58
58	Closed-ended reading quizzes	3.00	0.87	1.76	0.90	1.24**
59	Closed-ended vocabulary quizzes	2.89	1.17	2.00	1.00	0.89
60	Other closed-ended quiz types	2.88	1.25	1.76	1.03	1.12**
61	Short answer quizzes	2.63	1.19	1.94	1.03	0.69
62	Group or one-to-one messaging (e.g., Facebook messenger)	2.56	1.24	2.18	1.38	0.38
63	Closed-ended grammar quizzes	2.38	1.30	1.88	0.99	0.50
64	Creative writing (prompts, narratives, etc.)	2.38	1.30	1.56	0.86	0.82
65	Group writing (e.g., wiki-based writing activities)	2.22	1.20	1.59	1.00	0.63
66	Business email/memo/letter writing	2.22	1.20	1.44	0.96	0.78
67	Personal blog	1.75	1.16	1.24	0.66	0.51
68	Telephone conversations	1.63	1.06	1.24	0.75	0.39