

THE POTENTIAL EFFECT OF USING THE FLIPPED CLASSROOM APPROACH
IN THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

By

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Abstract

This research project is a case study of the potential effect of using the flipped classroom approach in the teaching of English as a second language in a reading and composition course at the University of Puerto Rico – Mayagüez during the fall semester of the 2013-2014 academic year. Using instructor interviews, student questionnaires, sample student work and classroom observations, the researcher analyzed the general implementation of the flipped classroom on the English course. The research questions sought to discover how the use of the flipped classroom approach impact the teaching of English as a second language and how might the use of such approach either enhance or diminish student learning of a second language. Results show that the flipped classroom approach can be effectively used to enhance student learning of a second language. However, for positive results require high student engagement, proper instructor planning and preparation, and correct technology implementation. The impact on the classroom can be positive if and when all components are present.

Resumen

Esta investigación es un estudio de caso acerca del potencial efecto de la estrategia del salón volteado en la enseñanza de inglés como segundo idioma en la clase de Composición y Lectura I (Reading and Composition I) en la Universidad de Puerto Rico, Recinto de Mayagüez durante el semestre académico de Otoño 2013. Utilizando entrevistas al instructor, cuestionarios al estudiante, ejemplos de trabajos estudiantiles y observaciones de clases se analizaron los efectos de la estrategia del salón volteado en este curso. Las preguntas de investigación buscaban descubrir como el uso de la estrategia del salón volteado impactaba la enseñanza del inglés como segundo idioma y cómo puede el uso de este tipo de estrategia puede aumentar of disminuir el aprendizaje estudiantil del segundo idioma. Los resultados muestran que la estrategia del salón volteado puede ser utilizada efectivamente para aumentar el aprendizaje estudiantil de un segundo idioma. Sin embargo, para obtener resultados positivos la motivación estudiantil, la planificación y preparación adecuada del instructor y la implementación correcta de la tecnología son necesarios. El impacto en el salón de clase puede ser positivo si esos componentes están presentes en el mismo.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

As new technologies are developed, the interests of students and the way in which they learn also continue to evolve. As a field, educators continue to realize these changes and organically work to transform the process of teaching and learning. The advantages of technology implementation in education have been well documented (Maeir and Warren, 2000). Now, more than ever, students spend a large portion of their day using their smart phones, laptop computers or tablets for social networking, information searching and entertainment. Today, YouTube is the third most visited website with over 2 billion views per day (Gomes, 2010). The power and popularity of video is undeniable and can and is being used as an asset in the classroom.

Lage, Platt and Treglia (2000) introduced the idea of using technology to “flip” the traditional classroom in 2000. Instead of having a traditional lecture in class and having students complete practice exercises at home, students watch video lectures at home and work on practice exercises and assessments in class, either alone or in pairs, under the guidance of the teacher.

While,

[r]esearchers espouse that youth are learning differently than any other generation. Many researchers believe that because youth are leading the way with technology, their technology practices impact the way they connect with the world around them. As a result, educators examine how to successfully engage youth in learning by understanding how to tap their technology practices (DeGennaro, 2008, p. 1).

The flipped classroom builds on students’ understanding of technology and therefore looks to use their strengths, interests and everyday interactions as a way to make content more meaningful and comprehensible. This method has been growing in popularity as an alternative to the traditional classroom in subjects such as science and math in both the primary and

secondary grades. However, no data has been found on its use for the ESL college level classroom.

Justification

This study attempted to discover the results of employing the flipped classroom approach to the teaching of English as a second language in a grammar and composition course at the University of Puerto Rico, Mayagüez. Too often it is assumed by those in and around education that teachers are not “getting to their students.” This common phrase is heard throughout the hallways of many academic institutions. Therefore, if we believe this to be true, teachers and professors need to explore alternative strategies to better engage their students. Because of increased technology use and students’ prolific use of phones and computers in the classroom, it is understandingly more difficult for a teacher or professor to gain students’ trust and attention. However, the “flipped classroom,” is positioned, at least by those who propose it, as an alternative to teachers who are used to teaching in traditional forms, which allows for more individualized learning environment with the use of technology outside the classroom. Such use of technology and a different goal, which is the better use of classroom time, for face-to-face contact between students and the teacher allow students to become more active participants of their learning process. The integration of the flipped classroom approach or other digital technologies to deliver content outside of class does not guarantee that the outcome during class time will be different in any manner. Nevertheless, due to the emphasis on learners becoming the driving force behind their own learning rather than the object of instruction, the “Flipped Learning model can help enable instructors to make the shift from teacher-driven instruction to student-centered learning” (FLN, 2013)

The question presented when evaluating this approach is not whether or not to flip a classroom. Professional educators ought to ask instead how they can use this model to become more effective as teachers and increase students' conceptual understandings, as well as procedural fluency (where necessary) (Gojak, 2012). According to Bergmann and Sams, the flipped learning model provides the necessary bridge to a learner-centered classroom environment, thereby enabling deeper learning occurrence (2012) that educators are seeking.

Eric Mazur at Harvard University is a leading researcher on "peer instruction" (1996), who emphasizes the kind of in-class interactional elements made more practical in a flipped classroom. Students respond and give feedback during peer instruction sessions, maximizing the time available with the instructor and making it possible to increase the focus on higher order thinking skills. The idea is that the flipped learning model can facilitate this type of one-on-one attention by relegating the lecture portion of the traditional classroom to the outside, and allowing for more individual interactions as teachers guide students in the integration and application of the content in class.

While the "flipped classroom" has been championed in various classrooms throughout the United States, primarily at the high school level, its implementation and success for English as a second language teaching had not been researched. Furthermore, while most studies focus on math and science content, the content analyzed in this study is the English classroom at the university level.

This study examines how the teaching of English as a second language was impacted and how the implementation of this technological method enhanced or took away from the student's second language acquisition. It also gathered commentaries from the course instructor regarding

her perceptions of the impact it had on student engagement, learning and achievement, as well as the instructor's view on using the approach in her future classes.

Research Questions

1. How does the use of the flipped classroom approach impact the teaching of English as a second language?
2. What are the advantages and disadvantages of the flipped classroom according to the data?

Significance of the Study

The aim of this study is to document the use of the flipped classroom approach in the teaching of English as a second language. It also aimed to discover how the use of the approach either enhanced or diminished the student's learning of a second language. The research centers on discovering instructor and students' perceptions of the effectiveness and appropriateness of the approach for the teaching of a second language, as well as, the motivation behind the use of the flipped classroom.

Definition of Terms

Various terms have been used in this thesis which need to be defined for better understanding of the terminology and content used. First, the term "instructional technology" refers to any educational tool designed to assist in the design and delivery of education. Digital technology involves the use of a computer or other electronic delivery device. When referring to the "instructor", this is the educator who serves as the primary teacher and decision-maker in terms of lesson-planning and delivery of lectures. A "video lecture" is a recorded lecture with audio of instructor or expert teaching, explaining or presenting a topic.

The "flipped classroom/flipped approach", also known as inverted classroom, is when educators turn around what is typically done in class, which is lecturing, with what is done for homework,

like practice exercises, through use of prerecorded video lectures watched online at the students' homes.

Conclusion

This introductory chapter provides the reader with a brief introduction to the flipped classroom and the research questions that guide this study. The subsequent chapters focus on the relevant history of the teaching of English as a second language in Puerto Rico, and a general description of the theoretical framework. The third chapter includes the multiple research data collection methods and description of the sampling strategies. Chapter four presents the data analysis and findings of the various data collected throughout the study. The fifth chapter focuses on the emergent themes and provides concluding ideas regarding the use of the flipped classroom approach in a college ESL course.

Chapter 2: Review of Literature

Overview

This research looks to contribute to the research on the impact of the use of technology as a tool in the English as a second language classroom and future teaching practices. Specifically, this study focused on the impact of the flipped classroom for the teaching of English as a second language in a basic English college course. In order to establish the study's theoretical framework, this chapter will seek to provide: (1) a brief history on the teaching of English as a second language in Puerto Rico, (2) a summary of language policies in Puerto Rico, (3) an overview of the use of technology integration as an approach for teaching language and (4) research on the integration of the flipped classroom approach in various classroom settings.

Brief History in the Teaching of English as a Second Language in Puerto Rico

Puerto Rico has been and still is dealing with major issues concerning language policy. Constant changes in governing parties and educational policies regarding language use have affected the teaching of both Spanish and English on the island for over a hundred years. The debate over the island's political status has had a major impact on the views of the population regarding the language controversy as language has become a symbol of support towards one ideal or the other.

Language and Education Policy in Puerto Rico

Puerto Rico, located in the eastern portion of the Greater Antilles, experienced roughly four hundred years of Spanish colonization, followed by an annexation to the United States in 1898 (Gyory, Mariano, & Ryan, 2001). When the Spaniards first arrived to the island during Christopher Columbus' second voyage to the Americas they encountered a culture known as the

Taino. This indigenous culture and its legacy have left an indelible mark on the culture of Puerto Rico, as well as some marks on the language of the island (Malavet, 2000).

Since shortly after the arrival of the Spanish conquistadores, the primary language spoken in Puerto Rico has been Spanish, with English becoming the co-official language upon U.S. imposition in 1898 (Algren de Gutierrez, 1987). In the early 1900s the island was just beginning to establish a school system and illiteracy was the norm. It was then that the U. S. Congress decided to establish a military government which was given the responsibility to establish a free and obligatory education system for Puerto Ricans. Some of the teachers teaching at the time were brought from North American and they were to teach all classes in English (Garcia Martinez, 1976 in Pousada, 1999).

General John Eaton, the Commissioner of Education from 1870-1886, was set on promoting Americanization through the teaching of English. All teachers had to be English speakers and the high school student candidates were tested in English. To develop an “American spirit” in Puerto Ricans and pro-U.S. sympathies, Victor S. Clark, the next Commissioner of Education continued the same practice. In 1900, the Foraker Act put a stop to this educational system by establishing a civil government that created the Department of Public Instruction (Mellado Parsons, 1979 in Pousada, 1999).

The new Commissioner of Education, Martin Brumbaugh, decided that it would be better to teach English as a subject and use Spanish as a medium of instruction, until the English language became the commercial and domestic language of the people. Brumbaugh continued hiring North American teachers, encouraging the celebration of U.S. holidays and the saluting of the American Flag. Soon afterwards, in 1902, the Official Languages Act established English as

the co-official language with Spanish. By 1911, Puerto Rican parents and teachers began to react aggressively to what they views “as a cultural colonization of the island” (Pousada, 1999).

In 1949, then Commissioner of Education Mariano Villaronga established Spanish as the medium of instruction at all levels of the public school system with English taught as a preferred subject (Algren, 1987). This is the system that actually prevails in the Department of Education of Puerto Rico. English teachers on the island are to teach English as a second language. Throughout the years various studies have been conducted to gauge how proficient Puerto Rican’s are in English and all have concluded that the majority of Puerto Rican’s have limited English proficiency (Angrist, Chin, & Godoy, 2006).

The Department of Education of Puerto Rico’s English Program Content Standards and Grade-level Expectations (2007) states the English programs mission “is to develop effective student communication in the English language” and wants to help all students become critical and creative thinkers “able to communicate orally and in writing and able to interact with the high expectations and demands of a society immersed in global interactions and collaboration” (p. 14). Yet based on test scores and public schools’ perpetual lack of performance on No Child Left Behind’s measures for Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), this is a mission that is yet to be achieved.

Concerning English teachers on the island, they are required to pass a certification exam which they can take after certain criteria are met. The Certification of Regulations for Teaching Staff of Puerto Rico 6760 (*Reglamento de Certificación del Personal Docente de Puerto Rico*) signed and approved on February 5, 2004 specifies that candidates hoping to obtain the English teaching license need to have completed the following requirements: First, a bachelor’s or

master's degree in either elementary or secondary education with a concentration in English or the Teaching of English as a Second Language (TESOL). Second, having passed the written and auditory English proficiency exam, as well as, having passed the foundations of education exam for the intended teaching level. The applicants must also have passed the teaching practice part of their certification with a grade no lower than "B". The candidates need to possess a teaching certificate in the desired level with a concentration in English or TESOL that includes nine credits in education foundations, out of which three credits must be in teaching methodology and having approved the oral proficiency examination provided by the Puerto Rico Department of Education. Also, these applicants must have obtained a total grade average of at least 2.75 in their degree to be considered for certificate examination (pp. 18-20).

Given the amount of preparation for English teachers on the island, the majority are well prepared and must go through many examinations to be able to belong to the teaching community. Despite having qualified teachers, one factor that is worth examining is the use of technology in the public school system classrooms. While teachers are well prepared and the new graduating teachers possess vast knowledge in technology, the Department of Education does not provide them with the necessary tools in their classrooms to be able to implement this knowledge to complement their teaching (Carroll, 2008).

The report written by Fielding Nair International (2010) titled, "Schools for the 21st Century: Setting a New Global Standard for Excellence" describes the current situation regarding technology in Puerto Rico's public school system: "[u]nfortunately, educational technology is an area in which schools in Puerto Rico lag far behind their counterparts in the United States and other developed nations." It goes on to explain the new goals of the department of education and the project called "21st Century Schools", which focuses on the remodeling of various schools on

the island to modernize them. The report indicates that the program will “equip the whole school with age-appropriate educational technology including high bandwidth Internet access, wall-to-wall wireless access, mobile laptop technology that can instantly convert any classroom/learning studio in the school into a “lab”, increasing computer access in the library, providing two desktop computers in every room, providing electronic whiteboards in strategic locations and providing students with access to other important educational technology equipment such as digital cameras, video cameras, printers and scanners as needed” (pg. 5). This project is currently underway. Nevertheless, despite the lack of technology in many classrooms throughout the island there is evidence that more and more students have access to internet either at home, in the public square of their local municipality, or via the hundreds if not thousands of free Wi-Fi zones that pepper both private and public establishments throughout the island.

Technology Integration as an Approach for Teaching Language

The idea of integrating technology into the English as a second language classroom is not a new one. Since the early 1970’s educators have been integrating technology in education in the hopes of improving student learning. Instructional technology implementation in schools has a scattered record. Zhao and Frank (2003) described the situation as confounding. Concerns about the slow adoption of technology by teachers are not new. Zhao and Frank (2003) analyzed this occurrence and have concluded that education institutions should be viewed as systems and instructional technology implementation should be properly placed within that system as a source of organic organizational growth or continuous improvement. In other words, their research posited that technology implementation is most effective when implemented as continuous improvement.

Because youth are now learning in a different way than preceding generations, due to the amount of time spent playing video games, on the Internet, using smart phones, and watching television, there is a more significant drive for educators to integrate these technologies.

“Considering how much time students play digital games, it is not surprising that gamers have different cognitive skills than the previous generations. Gamers have become very good at multitasking” (Green & McNeese, 2007, p. 9). According to research, students devote the main part of the day to the use of some sort of technology. This has produced students who are more active as learners and less accepting of passive learning activities, such as lectures (Beck & Wade, 2004). Because of their experience with technology, immediate feedback for work is expected from today’s students (Gee, 2003). With the current model of instruction instant feedback is irregular, if not impossible.

Researchers argue that technology does not make a difference in student achievement. However, Falcon (2010) and Wenglinsky (2005) give emphasis to the fact that technology in itself is not the key to great knowledge achievement. He points out that how teachers integrate technology in the classroom is the key. Wenglinsky argues that computers are very effective in enhancing student learning when used in conjunction with a constructivist approach. Class activities have to be wisely developed and guided so that students can be fully engaged in the learning process. Teachers will see that as students investigate, ask questions, write about what they are learning within an authentic context, they are also learning to read, write and think. In a technology-rich classroom, students do not focus on learning technology. It becomes a tool to be used for authentic learning. It is a means, not an end, which when used well helps to enhance student learning.

Educational technology is moving literacy instruction past its traditional verbalized and print mode. Technology is introducing new ways in which teachers can stimulate literacy in the hopefulness of helping students obtain the necessary literacy skills for future success. Instructors trust that technology has the potential to connect students to reading and writing as computers are creating new opportunities for writing and work in partnerships. The Internet is constructing universal bridges for students to communicate, emphasizing the necessity for strong reading and writing skills. By changing the way that information is absorbed, processed, and used, technology is influencing how people read, write, listen, and communicate (Holum and Gahala, 2001). If technology can achieve this for literacy skills, the possibility that it can do the same for language skills is great.

Computer technology has the potential for offering ways in which college instructors can help students improve their language skills. Classes of English as a Second Language in the Department of English at UPRM usually involve limited use of technology. Most classrooms have whiteboards, a computer and a projector. The use given to these depends on the professor or instructor. It is common for classes to be given using some sort of visual presentation program, such as Power Point or Prezi. Some instructors also integrate films, clips and music to their classes. Another practice that has taken hold on universities in the island is the use of language learning software, such as Tell Me More, for first year's Basic English students. These types of programs have the objective of providing language learners with varied tools to address "speaking, listening, vocabulary, grammar, sentence-level writing, and cultural awareness" (UPRM, 2013).

The shift in English as a Second Language (ESL) teaching methods to the communicative teaching approach has required more authentic communication in the classrooms of ESL and led

to an increasing use of technology. Kramsch and Andersen (1999) affirm that multimedia technology can provide genuine cultural contexts that are important for language learning. Studies on web-based learning have reported that the World Wide Web can be an efficient instructional technology in higher education. For example, Liou (1997) reports that when supportive Web-based materials are provided, the reading comprehension and writing skills of ESL College students have improved. Moreover, the increasing use of computer-mediated communication (CMC) has also become one of the most commonly discussed topics in language teaching (Alvarez-Torres, 2001).

Technology and information has impacted ESL education, as well as the ESL students. Today, as students with varied backgrounds enter colleges and universities, educators need to look for ways to serve this market. These students may have different levels of experience and learning, different learning capabilities, abilities and traits. Students in the same course may have different language proficiency in both the first and second language, and varying knowledge levels of technologies. Research supports the use of technologies with ESL students to help them acquire the linguistic, social and technological skills needed for success in the digital age (McGrath, 1998).

Technology has become necessary for the implementation of new teaching methods, such as the flipped classroom. This method requires technology, not only in the classroom but also in the students' homes. It also requires students to possess basic computers skills for its successful implementation in the classroom.

The Flipped Classroom Approach

Flipped or reverse teaching is an instructional approach that uses diverse technologies to support a focused and extended student learning process. Originally developed by Jonathan

Bergmann and Aaron Sams (Bergman & Sams, 2011) as a remedial approach for students who were absent from class many times, flipping has been accepted as a regular classroom practice in a number of schools, colleges, and universities since its creation (Gaikwad, 2012).

Using the flipped classroom approach, teachers 'teach' at night and students do 'homework' during the day. As its name suggests, flipping describes the transposal of expectations in the customary college lecture. This approach involves students in reading and watching video tutorials prepared by the teacher to cultivate a basic understanding of the key concepts to be acquired for a unit or lesson. It takes many forms, including interactive engagement, just-in-time teaching (in which students respond to Web-based questions before class, and the instructor uses the feedback to inform the day's teaching), and peer instruction. But the techniques all share the same fundamental principal: students do not go to the classroom to receive material in class, which is one reason some students dislike flipping. Instead they collect the information outside of class, by reading, watching recorded lectures, or listening to podcasts (Berrett, 2012). Students then come to class where they can consolidate, apply and extend these concepts through group discussion, problem solving and/or experimenting with the new concepts. In essence, what in a traditional classroom is homework has been flipped to become the classroom experience (Bergman & Sams, 2011).

This approach looks to allow classroom instructional time to be targeted to students' needs and prior knowledge. In the flipped classroom, teachers adopt the role of a guide while students are given the opportunities to engage in deeper and extended learning. This approach supports students' assessment by allowing teachers to effectively identify and respond to the learners' cognitive preparedness to perform a task (Bergman & Sams, 2011). The flipped

classroom approach assumes shared responsibility for knowledge acquirement. Students are able to identify what they already master and what they need to learn next.

The teacher, acting as a facilitator, needs to take care of setting clear expectations for students during the learning process and provide the needed support in the classroom. Another important matter regarding the role of the teacher in the classroom is providing constant student feedback, and to establish clear and challenging learning goals (Bergman & Sams, 2011).

Because the levels of students in a class are different; that is, the ability of some students is higher than others, the flipped classroom, using interactive and individualized technology-based instruction, allows ESL students to find better opportunities to contribute and feel more relaxed joining in the class discussions.

With more time to formulate questions and statements, students with limited language skills may be able to think about their answers and respond to them with more confidence. Moreover, if a student at the lower levels of English language skills is unable to understand the information provided he/she can replay the presentation until learning is acquired at their own pace. In a study of college students' perceptions and experiences with technology in a computer-assisted language learning environment, Bradley and Lomicka (2000) found that tasks and activities that involve the use of the computer to generate materials can promote successful learning.

Many professors have flipped courses for decades. For example, Literature professors expect their students to read a novel on their own and do not dedicate class time to going over the plot. Class time is devoted to discussion, exploring symbolism or drawing out themes. Other professors use the Socratic Method in large lectures, which compels students to study the material before class or risk buckling under a barrage of their professor's questions (Berrett,

2012). The videos, presentations and readings used in the flipped classroom approach are an extension of the teacher and help create a strong relation between the students and teacher. Technology does not replace the teacher, as many fear, but the role of the teacher becomes essential, as the teacher is active all day, getting the opportunity to work with every student, every class. The flipped classroom is not just about the video, even though these are the backbone of the approach. The videos provide additional classroom time to the teacher, where the development of rich activities is possible. It is not a magical solution to education problems, but a tool to enhance learning. It offers the possibility of solving issues such as not having enough time for discussion and doubt clarification in the classroom, as well as, student participation. The flipped classroom permits educators to work on the necessities of their students, as the videos are prepared by the educator for a specific group of students. It also allows for flexibility, since the videos are uploaded to the World Wide Web and students can access them from any computer in any place that has internet service available. The limits of the flipped classroom are limited by the instructor's imagination. Some instructors assign their students to create videos themselves of assigned topics or presentations (Johnson, 2012). A major benefit of the flipped classroom is the amount of class time teachers can spend with their students, inspiring, observing and facilitating student learning.

The flipped classroom makes use of screen capture, which is basically the recording of the lecture. This method has many advantages, such as effectively dealing with teacher and student absenteeism. It also supports guest speakers and guarantees instructional quality, since the instructor can edit the video content before posting it online. The screen capture also allows students to personalize their learning. It allows instructors to provide examples and guide students step by step through timely projects. (Green, 2012).

It may be the case that a student finds a specific lesson harder to understand and needs to review it more than once. The videos used in the flipped classroom give the students the opportunity for this. It also allows students to divide the lessons and work on them at their own pace. If the student has aptitude for a lesson, he/she can move ahead rapidly without becoming bored or disengaged. The flipped classroom videos have an added benefit that may not be thought of at first. The videos used make it easier on the instructor and students to see the flow of the classroom. It also helps in the case an instructor is unable to continue teaching a course, as the new instructor or substitute will have full knowledge of the past lessons.

During the Flipped Class Conference held in Woodland Park, Colorado in July 2011, teachers using the flipped method together wrote an article discussing the nature of the flipped class titled “The Flipped Class: What It Is and What It Is Not” (Bergmann, Overmeyer, Wilie, 2011). Teachers concluded that the flipped classroom is not “a synonym for online videos”. It is the interaction and the meaningful learning activities that occur during the face-to-face time that is most important. It is not “about replacing teachers with videos”, or “an online course”. “Students working without structure”, or “spending the entire class staring at a computer screen”. It is not about “working in isolation”.

Bergmann (et. al, 2011) conclude the flipped classroom should be used as a “means to increase interaction and personalized contact time” between learners and instructors. A setting where students “take responsibility for their own learning.” A classroom where the teacher is not the “sage on the stage” but the “guide on the side.” A coming together of “direct instruction with constructivist learning.” A teaching space where “students who are absent due to illness or extracurricular activities” such as sports or field trips, do not get left behind. A class where

“content is permanently archived for review or remediation”. A class where “all students are engaged” in their instruction. A place where all students can get a “personalized education”.

In 1984, Benjamin Bloom revealed that individual tutoring had an enormous advantage over standard lecture environments. The average tutored student executed better than 98 percent of the students in the average class. Until now, it has been hard to make individualized education affordable. But technology may provide a path to this goal. For example, the Khan Academy, which began when Salman Khan tried to teach math remotely to his young cousins, has been so compelling that by now, more than 700 million videos have been watched by millions of viewers. Stanford University tried something similar and offered three computer science courses online, using a similar format. In the first four weeks, 300,000 students registered for these courses (Koller, 2011).

Today’s students, many of whom grew up watching YouTube videos, find that video content is engaging. The ability to present content in short lectures is better suited to students’ attention spans, and provides the flexibility for students to tailor the instruction to themselves as individual students. Those with less preparation can dwell longer on background material without feeling uncomfortable about how they might be perceived by classmates or the instructor. In short, everyone has access to a personalized experience that resembles individual tutoring.

The flipped classroom lesson provides for engagement through exercises and assessments is a critical component of learning. These exercises are designed not just to assess the student’s learning, but to enhance understanding by encouraging recall and placing ideas in context. The testing allows students to move ahead when they master a concept, with the added benefit that the flipped method automatically assess students’ work, allowing them to practice while

receiving instant feedback about their performance (Koller, 2011). Such feedback is provided on the in-class assessments, which are generally completed after the student has watched the video lectures. Such practices allow the instructor to quickly understand whether students understood the assigned video or not.

A 2009 analysis by U.S. Department of Education, which analyzed 46 studies comparing online learning to face-to-face education, concluded that "blended learning," or programs that include elements of both face-to-face and online learning, are more effective than either approach by itself. The study also found that, by itself, online learning was more effective at raising student achievement than face-to-face instruction exclusively (Ash, 2009).

“This new report reinforces that effective teachers need to incorporate digital content into everyday classes and consider open-source learning management systems, which have proven cost effective in school districts and colleges nationwide,” said U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan in a statement. “To avoid being caught short when stimulus money runs out, school officials should use the short-term federal funding to make immediate upgrades to technology to enhance classroom instruction and to improve the tracking of student data” (Thomas, 2009).

Literature Review Summary

As pointed out, studies have suggested the benefits of learning technologies, specifically the use of learning technologies through the inverted classroom, also known as the flipped classroom. While the use of the flipped classroom is not new, there has recently been more widespread use of the method possibly due to an increase in accessibility to technology both in school and at home. However, the use of the flipped classroom in the teaching of English as a Second Language has not caught on the same as for the teaching of other subjects.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

Overview

The use of the flipped classroom approach in the teaching of English as Second Language, and for the teaching of language in general has not been the focus of much research. This section will provide a description of the research design, participants, site, methodology, and procedures used for this qualitative case study. The study focused on the use of the flipped classroom approach in one college level English course taught at the University of Puerto Rico to answer two focal research questions. This chapter will explain the methods used for data collection as well as how I analyzed the data.

Purpose

This research studies the use of the flipped classroom approach in the teaching of English as a second language with university students. The Writing and Composition I (INGL 3201) course in the University of Puerto Rico, Mayagüez Campus was the course chosen in order to ascertain if the approach is effective in this type of classroom. This course is required for students who enter the UPRM in the lowest proficiency track and therefore are required to complete four courses or twelve credits of English courses which focus on vocabulary building, writing, reading and grammar. The INGL 3201 Writing and Composition I course is the third course in the four course sequence. This study looked at the ways technology is being used to teach ESL and how the teaching efficiency changes in a flipped classroom versus the traditional classroom. This information shows an example of how the flipped classroom approach can be implemented in the teaching of a second language and this research provides an analysis of its effectiveness. Additionally, it serves as a guide to promote the future integration of the flipped classroom approach in classroom practices and suggests improvements in technology integration

with in the ESL classroom. This study's participants were in-service teaching assistants who were teaching the Writing and Composition I course and had never used the flipped classroom approach before in their teaching.

Research Questions

1. How does the use of the flipped classroom approach impact the teaching of English as a second language?
2. What are the advantages and disadvantages of the flipped classroom according to the data?

Research Methods

The research methods used in this study are mixed in their orientation and incorporate both qualitative and quantitative methods. The quantitative aspect stems from the questionnaire that students answered before the flipped classroom unit started. The qualitative component was present in the structured instructor's interviews, as well as, the other two data collection instruments, which included observations and unstructured student interviews.

The data encompassing the research is divided into three main areas. The most pertinent aspect within the data is the observation of daily class lectures, which were collected in field notes. During the twelve, 50-minute class periods, interactions and dialogues between students and students and their instructor were written down in a notebook and later transcribed. The second portion of the research included two structured interviews with the instructor. These instruments were administered before the flipped classroom unit commenced and once it finished. The purpose of these interviews was to better understand the instructor's take on the results yielded by the use of the flipped classroom and how these compared to the results of previous semesters. It also provided the instructor the opportunity to provide insight on previous

teaching opportunities, her experience teaching this course in the past, and the teaching strategies used during this course.

Yin (2009) argues that effective researchers should have the capacity to ask the correct questions and give an accurate interpretation of the answer received. In his own words it is essential for the researcher, “to be a good listener and not be trapped by her or his own ideologies” and to “have a firm grasp of the issues being studied” and to “be unbiased by preconceived notions” (p. 69).

The research method was a qualitative case study conducted “in a natural setting where the researcher is an instrument of data collection who gathers words or pictures, analyzes these inductively, focuses on the meaning of participants, and describes a process that is expressive and persuasive in language” (Creswell, 1997). Conducting qualitative research is a multifaceted process. The researcher engaged in inductive data analysis. This type of data analysis, as explained by Lincoln and Guba (1985), “may be defined most simply as a process of ‘making sense’ of field data” (p. 202). For this research, the data obtained from observations and student work was analyzed by the researcher to gauge the efficiency of the teaching approach in the teaching of a second language.

Sources of Data and Data Collection

Throughout this study I used four different sets of data to triangulate my findings. These various data sets are explained below.

Observations.

Classroom observations were conducted every class for the duration of the four week unit. Therefore, I met with the class on Monday, Wednesday and Friday for a total of twelve times within the unit. I documented my observations on a daily basis immediately after having

conducted the observations through field notes. Special attention during the observations was paid to students' participation and understanding of the assigned work that was to be done at home as well as whether or not students actually did the assigned work. The observations were key in picking up any signs of student frustration and being able to focus in on the relationships between the instructor and the students.

Structured professor interviews.

The Structured professor interviews consisted of two sets of open ended questions. A Pre-Flipped Classroom Instructor Interview (See Appendix A) and Post Flipped Classroom Unit Interview Questions (See Appendix B). The pre-unit interview's purpose was to understand the instructor's expectations of using the approach with her students. The post-interview looked towards gaging the instructor's experience while using the flipped classroom approach for teaching Writing and Composition I, versus her previous experiences in using more traditional teaching strategies. Both interviews were digitally tape recorded and transcribed after each interview.

Non-structured / Informal Interviews with students and teacher.

Throughout the flipped classroom unit, the principle investigator conducted observations. In my observations I looked at the performance of students, and the types of questions that they asked in order to gauge how much they understood the out of class work. In order to do so, I conducted non-structured, informal interviews with students in the class as they interacted and worked on their normal class assignments. Therefore, in addition to my role as researcher, I also helped the professor keep order, answer students' questions and facilitate some of the small group learning. The data that came out of these non-structured, informal interviews was incorporated into my daily field notes.

Student Questionnaire.

The study's questionnaire served to further understand students' expectations and attitude towards a new teaching approach. It also served to gather information on the use students give the internet in regards to their classes and learning experience. The questionnaire was designed and a consent form was attached (see Appendix C). This sheet had summary information regarding the study.

A twelve-item questionnaire was administered (see Appendix D) to all students willing to participate in the case study. Items one to three were aimed towards understanding the availability and access students have to computers and internet connection either at home, in their smartphones or at campus. Item four asked students regarding their internet usage for class research. Item five intended to find out if the students use technology to communicate with others to benefit their effectiveness in classes. In item six students self-reported the use given to technology in their previous English classes to produce multimedia projects. The seventh item asked students regarding the importance given to the use of computerized writing tools to improve their writing quality. The eighth item requested students to identify the use they give to the email and chat and how it relates to course work. Item nine asked students about their use of handheld devices, such as tablets and cellphones to complete their course work. Items ten and eleven referred to homework, item ten required students to recall past courses where questions and homework was frequently posted on a class blog or chat, while item eleven posed the premise that most of the English classes' homework consists of individual and small group work. The last item questioned students about their knowledge in regards to the "flipped classroom technique".

The instrument was used to receive background information from the students and build on previous and current experiences in courses where ESL and/or the content is taught using technology. The advantage of using this type of instrument was that it is common and familiar to most individuals. Additionally, the uniform questions lessened the chance of bias.

The questionnaire allowed for information to be gathered in regards to the experience the students have using technology in the classroom while taking an ESL course. Participants were also able to share some of the most common strategies used by professors when teaching an ESL course.

Participants.

The participants for this study were Puerto Rican university students, generally in their second year, taking the Writing and Composition I course in the University of Puerto Rico, Mayagüez (UPRM) campus.

The participants were selected purposely because the primary purpose was to examine the potential effect of using the flipped classroom approach in the teaching of English as a second language. The Writing and Composition I course offered an valuable setting for examination. The teaching assistant giving the course also played a crucial role in this research. This instructor delivered the class using the flipped classroom approach and was able to provide valuable information to the study.

When pondering on which of the various teaching assistants to approach for this study this particular teaching assistant came to mind because of her willingness to implement new and innovative lessons. Another reason for choosing her, is her knowledge on the use of multimedia as a teaching tool. She had never used the flipped classroom method, but was willing to implement it and work with me in planning the unit together.

Research Site.

The University of Puerto Rico at Mayagüez was initially established as a College of Agriculture when it was founded in Mayagüez on September 23rd, 1911. In 1912, the name was switched to College of Agriculture and Mechanical Arts (CAAM) until 1966, when due to a reorganization in the University of Puerto Rico, the campus was renamed as University of Puerto Rico at Mayagüez. The campus is now the second largest on the island and the only land, sea, and space grant state university of Puerto Rico. Moreover, it is the only campus in the University of Puerto Rico system that hosts a College of Agricultural Sciences, Engineering, as well as programs in Geology and Marine Sciences.

The University of Puerto Rico at Mayagüez boasts four academic units: Agricultural Sciences, Arts and Sciences, Business Administration, and Engineering. According to the UPRM Institutional Research and Planning Office (OIIP) submitted in November 1, 2012, it has 684 professors. It had an enrollment of over 11,984 students in the Fall Semester 2012-2013, from which 11,054 were undergraduate and 930 graduates (<http://oiip.uprm.edu/>). Spanish is the language of instruction in most courses at UPRM, yet a substantial amount of textbooks and research materials are in English. For this reason, students are required to have background knowledge of the English language. In fact, the UPRM 2013-2014 *Undergraduate Catalogue* under “Language of Instruction” decrees that, “Spanish is the language of instruction in most courses at UPRM, but students are required to have a working knowledge of the English language. The individual professor decides the language used in class lectures and in student evaluation activities” (p. 69).

Within the Faculty of Arts and Sciences is the English Department. Course offerings vary widely in the English Department, but can be simply broken into either institutional requirements

or requirements for English majors. Currently, the department has a faculty of approximately 37 professors, 45 graduate students of which 28 are Graduate Teaching Assistants and approximately 180 undergraduates (<http://english.uprm.edu/>). The Department offers a two-track program leading to the degree of Bachelor of Arts in English. Students select to lay emphasis on coursework in the area of literature or linguistics. The Department also works with other Departments of the University to offer students the opportunity to obtain certificates in Education, Film, and Office Management. The Department of English also offers a graduate program leading to the degree of Master of Arts in English Education (M.A.E.E.). This program is grounded in the areas of linguistics, literature, and pedagogy.

For this case study, the class chosen is an institutional requirement for students who scored below 570 points on the ESLAT (English as a Second Language Achievement Test). It was chosen because the course curriculum as well as the students' level of English language proficiency is ideal for the flipped classroom approach. Additionally, the instructor of record was enthused to participate in the study and was willing to co-plan with the principle investigator.

Students.

I used one section of 28 students who are in their third semester within the basic track, English sequence. These students were at least in their second year of university studies and came from a wide-range of different majors.

Graduate Teaching Assistant.

The GTA, or instructor of record was one of the most ambitious students within the MA in English Education program. While her undergraduate degree was outside of the Department of English she has recently focused all of her energy and time on becoming an English teacher. Her future goals are to complete a doctoral degree at a stateside institution. She has taught INGL

3201 for one semester and is therefore familiar with the course in which we instituted the flipped classroom. Furthermore, when approached about possibly participating in the study, she was moved to do so and willing to collaborate.

Data Collection.

After obtaining IRB approval, the data collection began the second week of October 2013. It lasted four weeks, with observations being held three times per week for a total of 12 observations. During the study, special attention and copies were made of students' work with their consent. All students and the instructor of record were provided a pseudonym to further protect their identity. A pre and post interview with the instructor of record were also completed. The pre-unit interview took an hour and consisted of twelve open ended questions. It took place in the instructor's office the week before the study commenced. The pre-unit interview was transcribed by the researcher immediately after completion. After the study had been completed the instructor's schedule did not permit for a face to face interview with the researcher. The post interview questions were sent via email to the instructor who answered in two days' time. This interview consisted of twenty-three open questions. The answers provided by the instructor were transcribed for the purpose of the study.

Student Surveys.

The survey which was administered during the first day of the "flipped classroom" unit was a 12 item questionnaire (See Appendix D). The purpose of the survey was to gauge how students feel about elements of the traditional classroom as well as their experiences with more flipped classroom teaching techniques. A 5 item post-study student questionnaire (See Appendix E) was administered to the students the class after the flipped classroom unit was completed. The purpose of this survey was to gauge the opinion and engagement of the students towards the use

of the flipped classroom approach in the second language acquisition (SLA) setting throughout their month long unit. Please see Appendix D and E for specific questions.

Interview Process and Protocol.

Yin (2009) highlights the interview as one of the most important sources of data in a case study. There are different types of interviews such as the open-ended interviews, focused interviews, and a more structured and formal survey interview. This research implemented the focused interview. The questions will be structured and less open-ended. An interview protocol was developed (Yin, 2003). This interview focus is valuable for when a study requires the use of multiple interviews.

Physical and Digital Artifacts.

I conducted a digitally tape recorded interview with the instructor of record for approximately one hour before she started the flipped classroom unit as well as an hour long interview after the flipped classroom unit concludes. The questions revolved around whether or not the instructor of record believed that her students had indeed learned from this alternative instructional format. Please see Appendix A and B for specific questions.

Data Collection Tools and Storage.

All the teaching artifacts that were provided by the case study participants were used to further inform the study. All the teaching artifacts were stored securely and locked away in the Department of English and will be destroyed after three years.

Data Analysis.

The data from the various different collection methods were analyzed in the following way. First, I transcribed the instructor's interviews, wrote up field notes and put questionnaire results in tables. These were further analyzed in a numerical manner by calculating the percentages for each item. Then with the use of multiple colored markers I proceeded to analyze

the data by highlighting tokens of data based on aspects of the data that facilitated the flipped classroom or worked against its implementation. For aspects that had a positive impact I used a green highlighter and those that negatively influenced the success of the flipped classroom were highlighted in orange. This procedure was repeated for all the data sets. Upon completion of the coding I re-read through the various data sets to identify themes that impacted both the positive and negative implementation of the flipped classroom. The subsequent chapter will present the findings from the various data sets.

Chapter 4: Findings

The Flipped English Classroom

The course used in this study was an English Composition and Reading course, which is the third course within the Basic English track sequence at UPR Mayagüez. It focuses on writing essays and doing oral reports on selected readings, including essays, short stories, poems, dramas and novels. The course is requirement for graduation for those enrolled in it. As a three-credit course, the students met three days a week, Monday, Wednesday and Friday. The section used in this study had 27 students who were at least in their second year of university studies and came from a wide range of different majors.

Classroom.

The classroom was a medium size room with no wall décor, many windows, two entrance doors and four large ceiling fans. It contained approximately 30 student desks arranged in rows, along with a chair and two large tables at the front of the classroom. One of the tables served as a desk for the instructor and another that held the computer system. Said system consisted of a desktop computer with Internet connection and speakers, a projector and a white projection screen. Students' desks were arranged generally arranged in straight lines, but were often rearranged depending on the day's activity.

Instructor.

The instructor of record, or GTA, was an MA student in the English Education program at the same university. She had taught INGL 3201 for one semester and was therefore familiar with the course in which we were instituting the flipped classroom. Furthermore, when approached about possibly participating in the study, she was driven to do so and willing to collaborate. Her attitude towards this experience was extremely positive and was evident throughout the study.

Her desire to help her students acquire new knowledge and skills was notable through the classroom observations. The instructor-student relationships observed through the study denoted goodwill between the educator and learners. The instructor maintained an environment of mutual respect within the classroom and provided support for the students. She provided clear instructions and go around the room commenting on student's work and providing assistance to those who required it. Her non-formal manner of giving feedback was well received by students and made it more comfortable for them to ask for help when necessary. It was interesting to see that the instructor used non-traditional teaching methods in class, such as playing music before class to set the mood and during class to help students concentrate better. She also used technology in her teaching, including Twitter.

Students.

The section chosen had 27 students who were in at least their second year of university studies and came from a wide-range of different majors. Out of these 27 students, 25 consented to participate in the study by signing a consent form. The students in the classroom were very attentive and chatty. They attended class regularly and seemed content to be there. Students respected and trusted their instructor and showed interest in the flipped classroom approach. Before introducing the study most students had never participated in or heard of the approach.

Flipped Classroom Unit.

The unit that was chosen by the instructor to be taught using the flipped classroom approach was the unit on rhetorical analysis. The objectives of the unit included: defining, identifying, and explaining the concepts of logos, ethos and pathos. Second, being able to apply the concepts in writing and categorizing diverse written and visual material within these three. Finally, applying the learned skills and concepts in writing a rhetorical analysis essay. Yet during the study the

rhetorical analysis unit was interrupted by a special documentary/interview opportunity, which was then adjusted to run under the flipped classroom method. While the rhetorical analysis unit's objectives were for students to acquire analytical and writing skills, the interview interlude focused on their listening and visual skills. They had the opportunity of watching an interview with a real astronaut and then were given the opportunity to write their own questions and have them answered via a Skype session with said astronaut.

Description of the Flipped Classroom.

The group was an energetic one with great rapport between the instructor and students. I was introduced as the researcher and explained I would conduct a study with the group. I already knew the group, since I had been present in some of her classes observing the group and even served as substitute instructor on two occasions. This made the group comfortable with my presence. This summary of class observations section is split into aspects of the observations that were deemed to facilitate the implementation of the flipped classroom and those that lessened the effectiveness of the approach.

Facilitating the flipped classroom.

The flipped classroom helped students become more responsive. Classes became structured and responsive once the unit began. Students that viewed the video at home were extremely responsive and seemed to understand the concepts perfectly. An example occurred when the instructor asked about the lesson taught in the video students responded in a positive manner and when asked if the video had explained well the terms one student exclaimed: "Yes! I watched it twice."

It was observed throughout the unit that students participated and completed their homework by watching the videos were engaged in the class discussion. It was obvious through students' participation that they had indeed understood some of the more difficult concepts that

were being covered in the videos. However, students who did not watch the video were not able to participate as fully as the ones that did. Observations suggested that the students who watched the video were able to grasp the concepts in the second language and were explaining them in their first language, while identifying them in their second. Often times, the instructor would use a quiz, which often did not count for points, as a mechanism to get students to realize the importance of watching the video lectures.

As classes progressed I could observe that students who engaged in the videos were learning the material, furthermore they did well in the pop quizzes. Also, students were able to complete their classwork and explain out loud what the taught concepts were. They also provided their takes on the video lectures and how they had helped them understand, even citing examples from the videos themselves. Another point that was seen was that those students who watched the video lectures were engaged in class and attentive, while those that could not or did not were more refrained from participation. None of the students in any of the classes expressed difficulty understanding the videos or the use of the flipped approach.

One of the days where the flipped classroom was a tremendous success was in the learning of the concepts of logos, ethos and pathos. This lesson came on a day in which I was asked to substitute for the instructor. Students had been required to do an activity based on the video lecture assigned in the previous class. Students were divided into groups and to look for advertisements that showed the use of ethos, logos, and pathos and were required to explain their examples to the class. The students were excited to participate and explain why certain advertisements fit into a category and sometimes into more than one category. The results were surprising in this case. Rhetorical analysis and especially the concepts of logos, ethos and pathos is something difficult not only for basic English students, but for intermediate ones too. These

students were able to apply their knowledge from the video into an authentic learning scenario and demonstrate their understanding of the concepts in under an hour. They understood the concepts which were explained in English. The students identified the concepts in written English and transferred the knowledge to their first language, since they were producing in Spanish and translating into English. In this lesson, the video lecture utilized to cover the rhetorical analysis and specifically ethos, logos and pathos yielded exciting results to the study. The instructor mentioned that she felt that those students who took the time to watch the video were able to grasp the concepts at a faster pace than previous groups taking the same class taught by her in other semesters. While there was no comparative group used in the study, as an instructor myself I do believe that students were able to make new meaning of the material quicker. Not only were they able to explain the concept, but also put into practice the acquired knowledge. It was fascinating to see how the students acquired the knowledge, transferred the same to their first language and were able to perform the required tasks in the second language.

One of the benefits observed throughout the unit was the instructor's willingness to allow students to use technology in the classroom. An example of that came when the instructor told them: "You can take out your phones if you want to see or hear her again. You can also look her up on Google." I will be looking at you to see that that is what you are really doing." Not only can the students connect at home, but in the classroom when they need to clarify something they had watched and do not remember well. The fact that the classroom had internet connection facilitated this and permitted them to be connected at all times if necessary.

Another benefit of the flipped classroom that was observed was the use of class time for enhanced discussion, instead of covering the material, students were able to discuss their questions, doubts and concerns with each other and the instructor. This was the case when they

were working on writing questions for the Skype chat and students checked question content with one another and asked the instructor for advice. The video lectures were vital in stimulating this type of conversation in the teaching space. It gave the opportunity to have less rigid classroom environment and permitted students to share the knowledge they had gained through the videos.

Weakened the effectiveness of the flipped classroom.

While there were indeed aspects observed throughout the unit the strengthened and positively documented the implementation of the flipped classroom approach, there were other aspects observed that took away from it. At the beginning of the unit, students looked nervous regarding the unit and kept talking to each other voicing their concerns regarding the approach. They were mostly concerned with the presentations being completely in English and not having an instructor there to explain it to them or translate. This fear of the unknown potentially affected their idea of what the flipped classroom was and how it would take place. This could have also been a factor in why some students chose not to watch the videos, even though they were required for homework. In order for the transition into the flipped unit, the instructor provided an example for the next class so they could see what was expected of them and what to expect of the approach.

Students not taking the time to watch the long videos for homework were something that was often observed throughout the unit. For example, the first time the group met after watching the first video the instructor announced a surprise quiz based on the lesson because she knew that only 15 students had watched the video lectures. The instructor, realizing what was happening before class, prepared a quiz and administered it to the group. The students who watched the video did extremely well, while those who did not, did poorly. Afterwards, in the class activity

which consisted of identifying the use of logos, pathos and ethos in a video featuring 10- television commercials, engagement was obvious and students were eager to voice out their answers. Those who did not watch the video for homework were lost and had to ask many questions to clarify their uncertainties. While the quiz was not counted for points, they were however used to gage the level of comprehension acquired by the students through watching the video.

Still the question regarding students' commitment to the unit and to the study in general lingered. It was noted that one fifth of the students did not watch the video lecture the first or second day of the unit. This led to the instructor giving the same quiz repeatedly to confirm their compliance with class homework. When students did not do their homework, the professor was really stuck in a difficult position as she had to determine whether or not she was going to spend a lot of time discussing.

Maintaining students' engagement.

Another example of the flipped classroom not working came with the assignment of watching a video interview to be discussed in class and which would help prepare the class for an upcoming videoconference. As with the previous video, only half of the students had watched the video. The instructor again had prepared a quiz based on the video. Giving quizzes constantly to the students served as a negative reinforcement to motivate them to watch the video lectures. It also pointed the importance of them taking control of their own learning and it had an effect also on the study. The need for these quizzes allowed the researcher to have a better idea of what is required from the students and from the instructor in this type of scenario.

Through my observations it was obvious that the instructor felt students needed to be constantly reminded of the amount of responsibility the flipped classroom required of them. An

example came when students were asked to come up with questions not answered on the video to ask during a subsequent Skype conference.

Instructor: “Which is the lesson here?”

Students: “Watch the videos.”

The instructor felt it necessary to strongly remind and even reprimand the students so that they would watch the videos. These reprimands often resulted in pop quizzes, which students obviously did not enjoy.

The experience of watching the video interview for the Skype chat was particularly eye opening because it raised a lot of questions regarding the use of the flipped approach and how effective or harmful it can be in the ESL classroom environment. Students who do not show interest and do not watch the videos affect the whole classroom. They do not bring anything to the table and this affects the class rapport. The instructor is forced to explain the most basic things that should have been acquired by watching the videos.

By the day of the video chat most students had watched the video and were asking if there was another quiz. Quizzes became an everyday routine to get students to watch the video lectures and participate in class. The instructor not only spent time preparing the video conferences and classroom activities, but was also forced to prepare quizzes to use as a reinforcement to get the students to do their homework.

Pre-Flipped Classroom Instructor Interview Summary

Using the flipped classroom for novice teachers is not as easy as it may seem. During the Pre-flipped classroom instructor interview (See Appendix A) the instructor was asked about her weekly classes’ activities and the use of technology in the classroom. She answered that she did not use the same techniques in all her classes and tries to incorporate new strategies and approaches. She explained that she takes into consideration the amount of students in the class and how they individually learn, while focusing on the class objectives.

The instructor noted that even though she had experienced using video lectures in other courses she had not used any this particular semester with the class chosen for the study. This made the introduction of the flipped classroom something new for the students who did not have a technological aspect integrated into their class. She also pointed out that most video lectures used were with the purpose of having a themed discussion and analyzing listening-comprehension skills. In other words, videos were used not to teach, but as a tool for teaching. Regarding the use of technology in the classroom, the instructor pointed out that she does use technology in most of her classes and this included but was not limited to computers and projectors, music and Twitter.

The instructor had read about and been to presentations about the flipped classroom approach before being approached as a candidate for the study, but had never used it herself. She said students had the necessary access to technology and the internet to fully participate in the study, which made the group an ideal one in terms of accessibility to the platform. She also believes they are very technological and will be able to catch on to the correct use of the technology implemented without her guidance.

According to their instructor these students were really tech savvy and capable of dealing with the imposed responsibility that comes with participating in a flipped classroom. As per the instructor, the students were up to date with the available technology. All had either a laptop or smartphone, if not both and knew how to communicate through social media services, such as Twitter and Facebook. They also knew how to work with digital presentation software, such as Power Point and Prezi.

The instructor was interviewed some more and asked her opinion on the use of video lectures to support teaching or learning. She replied that she saw these as “a very good

strategy”, but was concerned with the flipped classroom working too well. If it worked too well she would then be worried about what the role of the teacher would become in the future. When asked on the subject of the impact that the video lectures could have on student engagement, learning and achievement the instructor replied that she could not generalize and believed it to be dependent on the context of each classroom. “It might not work if they do not watch the videos. If they do it might help them.”

Accessibility of technology and its use for education

The data gathered from the student questionnaire highlighted the important fact that all participating students had access to the internet and knowledge of how to use technology to complement their classes as supported by their answers to questions one and two of the questionnaire. These indicated that access to the internet was not a problem for this study and would not negatively impact the implementation of the flipped classroom approach. Furthermore, one-hundred percent of the participating students (25) indicated that they have Wi-Fi capabilities via a personal laptop or tablet which was important because this indicates the fact that their internet use is mobile meaning they can do their video watching at home, on campus or anywhere else there is internet because they do not have to rely on public computers.

Thus, the study was not affected by students lacking media devices to have a full participation in the flipped unit by watching the video or lectures. According to students’ answers to question three, ninety-two percent (23) of the students claim they have internet access using their smartphones. While eight percent (2) of the students indicate they did not have internet access using their smartphones. But based on the previous question these students do have Wi-Fi capabilities using either laptops or tablets thus they all have access to the platform used for the flipped classroom unit. This is important because lower rates would have suggested

that students do not have access and thus the flipped classroom activities would have been impossible and reliable data results would have been far from possible.

Even though students had access to the internet and know how to use to do research for class they mostly depend on what is taught in the classroom. The premise “I always use the internet to research topics and gather information for my classes at UPRM” was answered by thirty-two percent (8) of the students fully agreeing to it, forty-eight percent (12) of the students agreeing, twelve percent (3) of the students were neutral and eight percent (2) of the students disagreed. This shows that even though they claim to be technologically inclined, both students and professors continue to use traditional methods for imparting and acquiring knowledge in the classroom.

The fifth question asked students to indicate if they thought that technology to communicate with peers and if that allowed them to be more effective in their classes. According to the survey ninety-six percent (24) of the students indicated they fully agreed with the item. Four percent (1) of the students said they agreed. Students in this level use technology to produce media projects using digital images, video, audio, or others in an English class at the university. All students (25) indicated that they had use technology to produce said projects to present in an English class at the university. This shows they do indeed have access to computers and enough knowledge on their use to fully participate of the flipped classroom unit.

The students trust that the use of computerized writing tools such as: thesaurus, and spell-check, works to improve their writing quality. According to the answers provided in the survey eight percent (2) of the students fully agree that these tools do not help them with their writing. Twenty percent (5) of the students agree that these tools do not help their writing. Four percent (1) of the students are neutral regarding these computerized writing tools helping or not

in their writing, while thirty-six percent (9) of the students disagree, indicating they believe the aforementioned writing tools do help. Thirty two percent (8) of the students fully disagree that these tools do help their writing, which indicates they believe that these computerized tools do indeed help perfect their writing. Students blindly trust that the use of these tools enhance their writing skills.

Students have many ways of communicating with peers, but they prefer to do so via email or chat. Their answers to the survey show that ninety-six percent (24) of the students fully agreed that they use primarily email or chat to do so. Four percent (1) of the students agreed that this was the primary form of communication used to collaborate with peers. Students at the university use primarily handheld devices, such as cellphones or tablets to gather and/or organize data, create concepts maps, write, for their courses at UPRM. Eighty-eight percent (22) of the students fully agreed that this was their primary form of organizing data, creating concept maps and writing for their courses at the university. Eight percent (2) of the students agreed that this was their primary method for data organization, concept map creation and writing. Four percent (1) of the students were neutral regarding the primary use of handheld devices for completing their course work. This indicates how students nowadays are dependent on technology and how they are always connected to the internet.

The use of technology in the university has increased exponentially as professors nowadays use class blogs or chats as part of their course work in previous English classes. Forty percent (10) of the student indicated that they fully agree they had used chats or blogs as part of previous English courses at the university. Thirty-two percent (8) of the students indicated they had used chats or blogs as part of other English courses. Twelve percent (3) of the students were neutral about it, while four percent (2) of the students disagreed and another four percent (2) of

the students fully disagreed with having used either chats or blogs in previous English courses. These results show how blogs and chats are being constantly used to complement English university courses, making students more aware of their correct use for education and the potential possibilities of their use. All of the students (25) fully agreed that most of their English classes' homework consisted of individual and small group work, which goes in accordance with how the flipped classroom unit works and what is expected of them within it.

The flipped classroom, even after being created three years ago to this day, is still a new concept for all courses, For English classes more so. Students were not educated on what it is, its purpose or what it involves for and from them. In the questionnaire, sixty-eight percent (17) of the students fully agreed that they had never heard of the flipped classroom approach. Eight percent (2) of the students agreed they had never heard of this approach. Twelve percent (3) of the students answered they were neutral about it. Four percent (1) of the students answered they disagreed, meaning they had heard about it and eight percent (2) of the students indicated they fully disagree, which means they had some knowledge about the flipped classroom approach or had experienced it in another class.

The full questionnaire shows that all the students in this class were able to connect to the internet at various times during the day. This permitted them to fully participate in the study and for their lessons not to be affected by the flipped classroom approach. Results also showed that the students were technologically savvy and had experience using the internet, not only for entertainment purposes, but also for information research related to classes. Information regarding their experiences with technology before this class was also gathered and it showed that at least 84% (21) students had experiences in class where they had to go into an internet platform to complete assignments. These outcomes show how the use of technology as an

educational tools is influencing the learning process of students in the English classroom, even if it is not through the use of the flipped classroom approach. They also suggest that students are ready to take more technologically supported courses, such as those using the flipped classroom approach.

The Post-flipped Classroom Student Questionnaire

The Post-flipped Classroom Student Questionnaire (See Appendix E) This questionnaire looked into the homework practices of students, the engagement they felt towards this new type of homework and the way they viewed it in comparison to traditional ESL class homework. The questions also probed into their opinion of the use that was being given to classroom time with this approach and provided an open response question that asked them to give suggestions for a better implementation of the approach.

Having students watch the video lectures at home is a realistic goal. According to the survey eight students (40%) answered more, while twelve (60%) answered less. This is important because there was a concern regarding the engagement they would have to do homework if it took them more time than the homework in a traditional English class would take. These results suggest that having them watch the video lectures at home is a realistic goal or that they did not watch the video. Since most of the traditional homework can be facilitated with the use of technology at home, while the videos cannot be skipped or find online summaries for them. Students did enjoy the classroom experience during the unit. According to their questionnaire answers students (50%) answered they liked the flipped approach much better than traditional classes. Six (30%) said they liked them better, while two (10%) were neutral and two (10%) said they liked them less. These results suggest that students enjoy the more active classroom environment that the approach provides. Seventy percent of the students believe that

time in the classroom is used in a more productive manner with the flipped classroom approach than within traditional teaching. As suggested by their answers five students (25%) thought it was used much better, nine (45%) said it was better, five (25%) were neutral and, one (5%) that they liked it less.

Students' engagement is very important for this type of teaching to succeed. According to questionnaire answers. But engagement has to be not only intrinsic but extrinsic. The students need to be reminded of their responsibilities towards this "new" kind of homework. regarding student engagement when watching the video lectures in comparison to completing traditional homework five students (25%) said they were much better interested, ten students (50%) better, four students (20%) were neutral and, one student (5%) answered less. In total, seventy-five percent of students said they were more moved to watch the video lectures than to have traditional homework. Answers to question number five were varied and ranged from students saying they forgot to watch videos for class because they did not connect to Facebook on a daily basis to others expressing their preference for this type of lesson. Some students wished to receive constant reminders to watch the videos while others wished the videos would last longer to provide more information and discussion questions so they could be more focused on the lessons. Some students raised awareness of the fact that some videos were put up the night before class and the time constraint made it difficult to watch the videos. A worrisome remark was made regarding the lack of commitment and responsibility of the group towards watching the video lessons. Positive remarks mentioned the change from class lectures to class activities and how dynamic that made the class. Students also mentioned the sharing of ideas for essay writing and having more time for putting into action the acquired skills and knowledge.

This post-unit questionnaire was important because it provides an idea of what the flipped classroom experience meant to the students and how they felt while engaged in this type of learning setting. According to the answers provided the majority of the students said they were more engaged and liked classes and homework better within the unit than what they do in the traditional setting.

Post Flipped Classroom Unit Instructor Interview

The instructor was also interviewed at the end of the flipped classroom unit. The Post flipped classroom unit interview questions (See Appendix B) looked to examine the overall experience the instructor had with the flipped classroom unit and her willingness to use this approach again. It also asked her about her thoughts on how to make the unit better for the ESL classroom.

In her interview the instructor indicated that the process of planning the flipped unit was longer and more tedious than expected. But after going throughout the process firsthand she felt much more confident about incorporating this approach in her future classes. When asked about her expectations for the results of this unit taught using the flipped classroom she answered that she expected to have more time to assess students' overall comprehension. She also expected students to be more responsible with their learning. As for the flipped classroom approach she mentioned she believes that the results were different from those obtained in a traditional classroom setting. She also stated "I expected the results to demonstrate a better grade and assessment than in the traditional setting." The results she saw in her class moved her to say that she will definitively incorporate this technique in her future courses. As for the impact the flipped classroom had on her students, the instructor indicated that a lot of students commented on how much they were enjoying not having traditional homework to take home.

The researcher asked the instructor regarding the benefits, if any that she could perceive through this type of teaching. The instructor indicated that a major benefit was being able to have the lesson at hand for future use. The lesson may be kept the same, however, the assessment techniques should change according to the classroom community.

The instructor observed for this study is convinced that the flipped approach is a good option for teaching ESL students. Some of the reasons is the fact that they can replay the videos if they do not grasp the meaning of something a first time. The video instruction platform also allows them to communicate with other students and the instructor to ask questions and comment on the class material. However, the instructor mentions that the unit did have a couple of hiccups at the beginning and these could have been foreseen by an instructor experienced in the flipped classroom. A major one being that over fifty percent of the students did not watch the videos on time and only began to watch them after the instructor began giving them quizzes on the video conference material. This demonstrates that the group was not responsible or not in touch with the reality of the flipped classroom and what was expected of them for it to function.

As for the students' reaction to the flipped classroom unit the instructor indicated they were mixed. Some enjoyed the videos and how class was rearranged, while others were not happy because it was not what they were used to and felt they needed the instructor's presence to explain the material and clarify their doubts. Still, the instructor commented she sees potential in the approach and she is planning to use it on future semesters to compliment her class. She indicated "I will try the same unit and a different unit to see students' reactions." She wishes to see how the learning process is altered in other groups and compare it to this one. She also noted that she felt student participation was altered once the quizzes were enforced in the class and a majority watched the videos.

Additionally, the instructor commented on how even though the unit was not completely successful she felt it worked well for helping ESL students in their listening and comprehension skills. Overall, she mentioned she felt the experience was “a challenging and invigorating experience. It is always great to learn about different approaches that might help my students.” The last question she was asked was: “Would you recommend it to anyone else?” The answer was “Absolutely”.

From this interview it is gathered that the flipped classroom approach was held in a positive light from the instructor’s point of view. The main problem found was that it took double the amount of time to prepare the classes, since the videos were prepared and then the activities, which would have been homework in a traditional classroom environment needed to be placed in the mold of a classroom activity. For the classroom itself, the major problem was the lack of commitment shown by the students. This leads to question if the approach needed more time to be introduced to the students, if the platform used was the best and if it would have worked better at another point during the semester. While some aspects were positive, overall the use of the flipped classroom left much to be desired.

Chapter 5: Discussion

Introduction

This study documented the use of the flipped classroom approach in the teaching of English as a second language in a basic reading and composition course in the University of Puerto Rico, Mayagüez. As technology use increases between students, educators need to explore alternative strategies to better engage them. Because of students' prolific use of phones and computers in the classroom, the "flipped classroom," has been positioned, by those who propose it, as an alternative to teachers who are used to teaching in traditional forms. Allowing for a more individualized learning environment with the use of technology outside the classroom.

Based on the class observations, student work and instructor's interview it is safe to say that the approach can work to teach ESL students. Student D commented: "I think that the program of flipped classroom doesn't need any changes. For me it works fine and is different and very interesting. I learned a lot more than usual."

During observation and interviews it was suggested that the method works well when students cooperate. Thus, it could be proposed that the method to be used occasionally in the case of extended educator absence or possibly for a particular lesson. However, it was observed that the exclusive use of the method over an extended period, in this case one month, could make aspects of the learning seem redundant and boring for the students. The study lasted four weeks and it was obvious to everyone that they began to lose interest by the end of the second week. It was during this week that some students shared their feelings of wanting to go back to the traditional methods. This brings on the concern that for the flipped approach to work the students need to be actively involved in the learning process and take responsibility of watching the video lectures.

Snowden (2012) presents a study in Texas regarding the perception of teachers in relation to the flipped classroom as a replacement for traditional in-class lectures. Snowden found that English teachers agreed that their classroom would not benefit from the use of this approach, unless it was only used on occasion. All four-teacher participants said, “they rarely “lecture,” and instead their classroom is filled with discussion and interaction - something that could not be replicated if students were to do classwork at home.” Teachers in this study understood that homework given to their students was not the kind that would suffer major changes if supervised by a teacher. They also commented that using the method “on occasion” to reinforce a lesson, or in case of extended absences, was more viable than to have a full-on flipped classroom (Snowden, 2012)

The thoughts expressed by those teachers regarding the flipped classroom approach in the English classroom are very alike to those expressed by the ESL instructor at the university level during this study. Language learning is viewed as more interactive and person to person than any other course, such as math or sciences and even though the flipped method proved to be effective in the teaching of concepts and rules in the case of essay writing it is not necessarily as effective in the teaching of other skills in the English class setting.

Once all data was gathered, the researcher examined all the obtained data and color coded it according to its impact, either positive or negative, on the flipped unit. From the data collected for this study three major themes developed these are: teacher planning and preparation, Students’ engagement and technology implementation. Each one of these themes came up more on various occasions in the interviews, survey and classroom observations.

Emergent Themes

The three most salient themes that emerged from the data were the impact that the flipped classroom had on teacher planning and preparation, students' engagement and technology implementation. These three emergent themes will now be discussed in detail.

Teacher planning and preparation

Students' comments on the flipped classroom led to articulate the importance of outstanding teacher planning and preparation. Students were requesting more activities, more dynamic videos, the use of other visual resources and the use of themes of social interests to complement the class. All of these require excellent teacher planning and preparation and in addition to creativity and knowledge they all require time. All good teaching takes time, planning and preparation, but the flipped classroom planning is more intricate, since it asks the teacher to think outside the box and prepare material that will fulfill all of his/her student's needs without being physically in front of them to answer their questions at the moment. The instructor needs to plan ahead using what he/she knows about the students and be proactive in clearing up possible questions and concerns before time. Furthermore, the instructor needs to anticipate questions and concerns that students may have in order to answer questions that might arise. This can be extremely difficult, even for the best teachers.

A problem that was confronted during the unit was the lack of time. The planning and preparation of the videos and classroom activities were occurring only a few days in advance. Even though the class schedule had been prepared with months in advance the preparation of the video and the many classroom activities took more time than originally anticipated.

The flipped classroom can be dynamic and once the videos are prepared, they can be used over and over, but the initial preparation time is much longer than that of a traditional class. This

was a factor that was not considered by the instructor when the unit began. After the first two weeks it was noticed that every lesson had to be thought out and prepared with many days in advance to have enough time to upload it in time, prepare the classroom activities for it depending on the group and be prepared to discuss it and have it have a full impact on the classroom.

Time constraints have prevented educators from flipping their classrooms. In an interview in a school district in Minnesota teachers interviewed talked about their experiences with the flipped classroom. One of the educators pointed out that “it takes four to five hours to create a good 20-minute flipped video.” Another, expressed that even though her goal was to “use the flipped classroom” in all her classes, it is “a very time-consuming endeavor” (Parkway Schools District, 2013). The same situation occurred with the English course instructor being observed for this study. She had not accounted for the amount of time it took to create video lectures. One of the programs used to create video lectures for this specific unit was Voice Thread. The instructor had never used this program before and learned to use it for this unit. Learning to use the program was an ongoing process and took effort and time from the instructor. The instructor also used Power Point and Prezi. Video lectures for this unit lasted from 45 – 50 minutes and took at least double that amount of time to be created. In the days that videos from the internet were used hours were spent deciding which was appropriate to the theme and language level. Apart from creating the video lectures the instructor spent additional time developing classroom activities to covert the 50 minutes of class time. These activities needed to be engaging and challenge the students to use the newly acquired knowledge to the best of their capabilities.

Students' Engagement

During classroom observations the researcher noticed how the group was not completely engaged. There was a majority of students who did not watch the first video lecture and about a third of the students did not watch the video lecture on the second day. The implementation of daily written quizzes was helpful to achieve a large percentage of views, but it was frustrating for the instructor to have to take additional time to prepare these and administer them during class time. At the end of the unit, when students filled out the post flipped classroom questionnaire various themes emerged in regards to their feelings towards the flipped experience. When they were asked about what suggestions they would give for a better implementation of the approach answers showed common themes. Most of which dealt with student's lack of a sense of responsibility towards watching the video lectures. An example of these comments came from student I who replied by writing "it should be done with responsible groups" not like her classmates who she considered irresponsible. She felt the approach was "dynamic" but sincerely thought that "in this group it did not work" – "If it were a group that showed respect it would have been great". Student N pointed out that watching the videos needed to be "compulsory" or "additional" (more traditional) homework regarding the video should have been given so students felt the need to watch these.

The implementation of daily quizzes brought on more work for the instructor and a feeling that students who had not watched the videos were being punished. The daily quantitative assessment negatively influenced the students who watched the video not because they wanted to, but because they did not want to fail the course. This was something unexpected. The ideal situation would have been for students to be so engaged in the approach that they would watch the videos daily. This lead to think if this was due to the flipped approach being implemented in

the middle of the semester or the topic that had been chosen to be taught via this method. It also lead to questioning whether it was worth all the effort that the instructor went through to develop and implement the approach instead of teaching the subject in a more traditional manner.

The flipped classroom looks to engage students through the use of technology. Since most students at this time and age spend a lot of time connected to the internet, whether looking for information or communicating with others, the flipped classroom takes advantage of this for students to feel more connected to class and be moved to learn and participate. In the class observations it was noticed that for students to be engaged, the video lectures need to be dynamic and deal with social issues. Student K suggested that “classroom activities need to more interesting videos and to talk about social interest topics and what is happening in the world.” This may be the key to motivate those students who lacked the needed desire to learn the second language. Engagement was proven to play a central role in their performance and language learning.

Engaged students who do the work were far ahead of those who did not do the homework. Thus the instructor had to decide whether or not she would attempt to get the students up to speed on the lesson or whether she would review the material to make sure that everyone was prepared for the lesson and leave the others behind. Thus, using the flipped classroom can be a high stakes environment, which seems to work when the whole class is on task and motivated. But when there is a sizeable amount of students who do not do the homework, which can be more time consuming than traditional reading or writing assignments, the instructor or professor has major decisions to make. They can either leave those who did not do the homework behind and cater the class to those who did the work or he or she can review the material and hold back the students who came into the class prepared.

A suggested action to take in order to force students to come prepared could be to offer an e-quiz along with the video. This way, students will not feel they are being punished and will better understand what is expected of them. This will also help students maintain a greater sense of responsibility towards the online lesson and they will not be faced with the harsh surprise of an unannounced quiz. Another way to do it would be by having students answer questions based on the video to be graded or revised by the teacher.

Technology Implementation

A factor that was noticed during the flipped classroom implementation was that students did not spend much time connected to the social web site (Facebook) which was used as a medium to post the videos forgot to watch them. Student B commented: “I do not spend a lot of time on FB [Facebook] and when I get to the classroom I am lost because I did not know about the homework.” Student E replied that the only problem he saw with the flipped approach was that in his case he “always remember but before I went to sleep or when I was doing something else”. In this sense the technology implementation of the unit was faulty. For successful implementation, at least during the first weeks, there should have been daily reminders, not only in class or through the medium used to post the videos, but through email and maybe even through a buddy system that would serve for students to remind each other of the “homework.”

The students who did not use Facebook as often as others felt left behind or forgotten. It may be that they did not feel comfortable within social media and thus stayed away from it because they feel it takes time away from their academic life. Or perhaps they simply did not want to mix their own social media with that of the class. It is interesting to note that two students opened Facebook accounts just for class, while another used a family member’s account to sign in to the Facebook group because she refused to create an account. Carroll (2008)

identified the popularity of social media especially that of Myspace and Facebook, but what is not understood is how much students accept their schoolwork medaling in their social spheres.

Another factor that can affect the technology aspect of the flipped classroom is that watching videos can take a long time, in the case of this study from 45 – 50 minutes, whereas, reading a chapter, a poem or other readings can be done quickly or by skimming the contents. Not to mention the use of cliff notes or summaries of readings available online, and very popular among the particular population that was used for this study. Students who have the ability and are used to completing traditional homework at a fast pace might find it's too time consuming to watch the videos. Given the results from the questionnaire, we still do not know how much time students were spending on their homework during the flipped classroom unit. The questionnaire indicated that majority of the students were actually spending less time on their homework during the unit when compared to non-flipped classes. However, this could have also meant that they did not even do the homework in the first place because it could have been too long or difficult. Thus, they would obviously spend more time on their traditional homework.

Research Questions

This research documented the implementation and use of the flipped classroom approach in a Basic English course at UPRM. The student participants never had the opportunity of taking an English class using this particular approach. Thus, going into the study the research questions were:

Question1: How does the use of the flipped classroom approach impact the teaching of English as a second language?

The flipped classroom approach proved to have the potential for a positive impact in the teaching of English as a second language. The objectives of the unit were achieved. Students

learned at a fast pace and were able to use the learned skills. Those who viewed the online lectures and presentations were able to recognize, define and apply the material discussed in the video lectures. The success of the teaching part of the study was such that during observations students were heard using translanguaging to explain the concepts in their first language and then applying them in writing in English (their second language). This fact proves that the approach impacted their learning in a positive way.

There are many successful cases of the flipped classroom in math and science classes. One of them was at Michigan State University, where in 2008 the university gave concept inventories to students before beginning calculus and after they finished. The difference was calculated relative to the maximum gain they could accomplish. Students in Michigan's flipped courses showed gains at about twice the rate of students in traditional classrooms at other universities who took the same inventories. The students at Michigan State who fared worst showed the same gain as those who demonstrated the largest increase in understanding from traditional lectures in other institutions (Berrett, 2010). However, there is little to no record of its success in the English, much less in the ESL classroom. In the case of this study, objectives were met by the students that had watched the video. These students learned the material and were able to apply it, but those students that did not watch the video were left behind. In fact, they were completely alienated from what was being discussed and the completion of the day's tasks. They seemed to be even more far behind than what they would have normally been if they only had to do a reading or complete exercises for their homework.

The flipped classroom becomes not only time consuming for the instructor who plans and develops it, but also for the students who are required to spend a set amount of time in front of the computer watching the video lectures. While students might be adept at technology and the

use of social media, watching long lectures on their computer for homework is not generally what college students are doing when they get home from the university. Within the flipped classroom all students, no matter their level, need to spend the same amount of time in watching the video lectures a first time. It may be more time for those students facing greater challenges with the language or concepts. This issue may slow down the students who tend to complete their traditional homework in a shorter period of time. Students who read faster, have the ability to skim through a reading or write at a faster pace now would have to spend the same amount of time watching the video as those students who take longer completing their work or are unmotivated. The flipped classroom, creates an all or nothing scenario where the pressure is on the students to become agents in their own learning. As a result of this often foreign pressure, some students may not cope well with this amount of responsibility. If the professor goes right into class activities and does not spend time summarizing concepts learned over the videos, students who did not complete their homework will not be able to participate in classroom discussion or complete the assigned tasks for the day. Whereas, traditional classes are more dependent on the instructor and lower responsibility is placed on the students in regards to their education because it is easier for the professor to compensate and spend more time on the lecture if students do not seem to be understanding the concepts.

Question 2: What are the advantages and disadvantages of the flipped classroom according to the data?

For the teaching of rhetorical analysis the approach proved to be effective in those students that put in the time and watched the videos. During class time it was observed how these students understood the concepts showed in the video lesson and how they were able to explain them orally in their first language. When students were asked to complete written tasks in their second language they were able to take that knowledge and translate it into their second

language. It was fascinating to see how the approach enhanced their acquisition in terms of the acquired knowledge. Students were able to understand the second language in the video and learn from it. This proves that the approach can be effective in students' learning when students indeed participate in the flipped classroom activities conducted outside of class.

However, students who did not watch the video lectures and showed no desire to partake in this type of lesson gained very little if nothing from the task. The flipped classroom requires an actively participant student who is motivated and responsible for his/her own learning.

Unfortunately, some students enrolled in the required Basic English course observed in this study seemed to put their other courses and personal lives before their English course. Furthermore, watching videos can be extremely time consuming and present an all or nothing type scenario, whereby students are forced to fully engage in the video or they learn almost nothing. This is extremely different from traditional scenarios where students are required to read and can often find concise summaries or even cliff notes of the reading online or even by skimming through the text. These skimming and/or finding of summaries can cut down on the students' homework time and at least gives the student an idea of what they can expect when the content is discussed in the subsequent class. This is not the case when using the flipped classroom approach as it is almost impossible to fast forward through a video or find a summary online.

The flipped classroom, as stated earlier, can be effective in enhancing second language acquisition for those students who have high levels of engagement and are appropriately held accountable by the instructor. For those students that do not meet these standards the flipped classroom can actually have a negative impact. If the teacher chooses to focus the class solely on the video he or she will leave students who did not watch the video way behind and in a difficult spot to catch up. On the other hand if the teacher caters the class to those who did not participate

in the outside work, those who engaged in the flipped activity are held back. Thus, the implementation of the flipped classroom approach should take into consideration students' engagement as well as the instructor's ability to hold students accountable. The flipped classroom is not ideal for every ESL classroom but when used correctly with the right students it can expedite learning outcomes and provide for a rich classroom experience.

Limitations of study

The process for developing this study was complex and difficult. At first, I envisioned a study in which I could observe two groups of students being taught the same material, one using the flipped classroom approach, while the other used the traditional method to be able to compare and contrast the effectiveness of both methods. The initial plan backfired due to time constraints and lack of participant instructors.

Thus the research focused on a single unit taught in the course described above. Therefore, the results of this study cannot and does not intend to apply to all units of study within an ESL classroom and cannot be used to make generalizations regarding other English classes or groups at UPRM.

Another limitation was how to actually assess the amount of time students actually spend doing homework. Students often try to use every shortcut available to help them complete their work in the least amount of time possible. It was unrealistic for me to expect them to tell me exactly the amount of time it takes them to do homework since they know me as an instructor and peer of their own instructor. It is impossible to assess whether or not students spend the same amount of time completing their work for the flipped classroom as they do with traditional homework, which mainly consisted of reading.

Suggestions for Future Research

Based on the limitations for conducting this research, I present a few suggestions for future research. The first one would be to find more professors and student participation. A cross reference group would have allowed the study to be more encompassing and would allow a point of comparison and contrast between the flipped classroom approach versus other traditional classroom approaches in the English (ESL) class. Serving as an attainment and their effectiveness.

Data collection methods could also be improved. If possible, observations should be videotaped to allow the researcher to go back, review the dialogue and observe the non-verbal responses being used by students. Another suggestion is to study how the approach function not only in Basic ESL courses, but in Intermediate and Advanced ones. Being able to observe diverse class scenarios would allow researchers to study the effectiveness of the flipped classroom approach in terms of language use and comprehension by ESL learners.

Concluding Remarks

This study sought to discover the results of employing the flipped classroom approach in the teaching of English as a Second Language in a Grammar and Composition I course at the University of Puerto Rico, Mayagüez. Its first goal was to answer the question: How does the use of the flipped classroom approach impact the teaching of English as a second language? Second to answer the question: How might the use of such approach either enhance or take away student learning of a second language?

The research was a case study where the researcher was a participant observer focused on a single section of this course. The case study suggests that when students are motivated the flipped classroom can be an effective approach in a college level ESL course. Given the kind of mixed results coming from the students it is difficult to give any definite answers; however, it

seemed that those who were motivated and did watch the videos were able to meet the objectives. It may be that this class is not the ideal one to place such an amount of responsibility on the students. The Basic English course as it has historically been taught at UPRM is extremely traditional in using non-flipped techniques and thus the abrupt implementation of said techniques may have unduly placed unwanted pressure on the students to perform. This pressure could have had a negative result and forced some students, who would have normally participated, to not participate at all.

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Appendix A – Pre-Flipped Classroom Instructor Interview

Sample Instructor Questions

Pre-flipped classroom unit –

1. Tell me about how you teach during a typical week.

Possible follow-up questions:

- a. Do you use video lectures to support your teaching?
- b. Do you incorporate any technology into your teaching?
- c. How has that worked for you?

2. Do you know what the flipped classroom is?

3. Have you ever flipped your classroom?

4. Do you think your students have access to the technology that is necessary to implement the flipped classroom?

A. Do you foresee yourself having to train students or help them with their questions regarding technology?

B. How tech savvy do you think your students are? Why or why not do you think they are tech savvy?

5. What do you think about using video lectures to support teaching or learning?

Possible follow-up questions:

a. What impact do you think video lectures will have on student engagement? Learning?
Achievement?

6. Is there a question I haven't asked? Is there anything else you want to tell me?

Appendix B - Post Flipped Classroom Unit Interview Questions

1. Now that we have worked on the planning of a flipped unit, was it what you thought?
2. Do you feel confident in teaching a unit using this method? Why?
3. What do you expect as a result for this unit taught using the flipped classroom?
 - a. Do you believe the results will differ from those obtained in the traditional setting?
 - b. Explain.
3. How do you think this unit will impact your teaching?
 - a. How do you see it affecting your students' learning?
 - b. Do you think their engagement will change? How?
4. Do you feel it takes more time to prepare this kind of unit or the traditional one?
5. What benefits do you see in this type of teaching?

Post Unit Interview Questions

1. How do you feel about the flipped now that you have experienced it?
2. Do you think it is a good option for teaching ESL students?
3. Were the results obtained what you expected? How?
4. Did you receive any negative or positive comments from your students?

If so: Could you give me an example?
5. Do you see yourself using this method in the future?

- a. In a similar type of unit or teaching a different unit?
6. Do you feel the learning process changed for the students?
7. Did you notice a change in student participation or attitude once the flipping method unit began?
8. Do you see any benefit in this teaching method?
- a. Is it appropriate for teaching ESL?
9. Overall, how do you feel about this experience?
- a. Would you recommend it to anyone else?

Appendix C – Informed Consent Form

INFORMED CONSENT

THE POTENTIAL EFFECT OF USING THE FLIPPED CLASSROOM STRATEGY IN THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

Purpose: You are being asked to participate in a case study that examines the effectiveness of the “flipped classroom” teaching strategy. The study hopes to contribute to the growing body of research on the effective teaching College English. You are being asked to participate because your experience may work to help others.

This form explains the purpose, procedures, benefits, risks, and precautions of the case study. Please ask any questions you might have after reading the form.

Benefits of participation: There are no tangible benefits to your participation.

Voluntary participation: Given that the syllabus includes the activities for your section, all students will be participating in the “flipped classroom”. However, you have the option of not answering either (or both) the initial or final questionnaire, which will be given during class time. If you elect not to participate you will also not be asked any interview questions throughout the duration of the “flipped classroom” unit. Your decision to not participate is completely voluntary and will bring no negative consequences to you or your grade in the class. Should you decide to participate, you can change your mind at any point in the future and withdraw your participation in the study.

Cost and Compensation: There will be no incentive for your participation. However, after the study is completed, results of the research will be made available to participants upon request.

Confidentiality: Should you decide to participate, your name and participation will be confidential. If the study is published NO identifiable information of volunteer participants will

be included in any published research. Data collected through both questionnaires and taped interviews will be kept in a locked desk in the Department of English and no unauthorized people will have access to this data. The data will be stored until May 2015 and then destroyed.

Contact Person: If you have questions or concerns about the interviews, you can contact me at jennifer.lopez9@upr.edu

CASE STUDY VOLUNTEER'S STATEMENT:

I have been given a chance to ask questions about this case study. These questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I may contact Jennifer Lopez at jennifer.lopez9@upr.edu if I have any more questions about taking part in this case study.

I understand that my participation in this research project is voluntary. I know that I may quit the case study at any time without harming my future care or losing any benefits to which I might be entitled.

I have read and understand the above information. I agree to participate in this case study.

Study Participant (signature) Print Participant's Name Date

Appendix D - Pre-study: Student Questionnaire

THE POTENTIAL EFFECT OF USING THE FLIPPED CLASSROOM STRATEGY IN THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

Pre-study: Student Questionnaire

Please mark with an X with your response, using either a pen or pencil. Make sure to answer all questions before turning it in. Thanks!

	Availability and access to computers and internet connection:	yes	no
1	I have access to internet at home via a desktop (not laptop) computer		
2	I own my own laptop or tablet that has wifi capabilities		
3	I have access to the internet by using my own smartphone		

		Fully Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Fully Disagree
4	I always use the Internet to research topics and gather information for my classes at UPRM					
5	I think that using technology to communicate with others allows me to be more effective in my classes.					
6	In most of my English classes in the past I have used technology to produce multimedia projects that use digital images, video, audio, etc.					
7	I do not think that the use of computerized writing tools such as: thesaurus, spell-check, work to improve my writing quality.					
8	I primarily use email/chat to communicate and collaborate with peers					
9	I primarily use a handheld device (ex. Cellphone. Tablet) to gather and/or organize data, create concepts maps, write, for my courses at UPRM					
10	In the past I have frequently posted homework or questions on a class blog or chat as part of my course homework					
11	In most of my English classes my homework consists of individual & small group work.					
12	I have never heard of the “flipped classroom technique”					

Appendix E - Pre-study: Student Questionnaire

THE POTENTIAL EFFECT OF USING THE FLIPPED CLASSROOM APPROACH IN THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

Post-study: Student Questionnaire

Please mark with an X your response, using either a pen or pencil. Make sure to answer all questions before turning it in. Thanks!

When we talk about the traditional classroom/approach we are referring to a classroom where the teacher gives a daily lesson and students work on the practice activities home for homework.

The flipped classroom/approach refers to the classroom where students watch videos, presentations or have readings to do for class. In the classroom students complete activities with the guidance of the instructor.

		More		Less		
1	During the flipped classroom unit did you spend More time on homework than you usually do in this class, or Less					
		Much better	Better	Same	Less	Much less
2	How did you like the classes within the flipped approach in comparison to traditional English class approach?					
3	Rate the use of time spent in the classroom during the flipped unit in comparison to the traditional approach of other courses.					
4	How motivated did you feel about homework during the flipped classroom unit in comparison to the traditional English homework?					

5. What suggestions can you provide for a better implementation of the flipped classroom strategy in the English class?
