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Flipped Teaching And Learning In English Language Programmes In Higher Education

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FLIPPED TEACHING AND LEARNING IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROGRAMMES IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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Abstract

Flipped teaching over the past fifteen years has invaded the classrooms of schools and has helped evolve the teaching strategy of different disciplines. Although the concept emerged as 'inverted teaching' to allow space for active learning in the school classroom, flipped teaching today, has found its way to higher education settings. Higher education institutions such as Harvard University, have used this approach in physics and other disciplines. Literature reviews however, show that there is little research in the field of Teaching English as a Foreign Language related to using the flipped approach. This paper aims to share the classroom experience of using the flipped teaching approach in delivering English language modules in a higher education setting in the Middle East. The paper will focus on English language teaching using the flipped method, how flipped teaching has impacted L2 students' English language learning, which technical tools are effective for flipped teaching, student support strategies and assessment within the flipped teaching approach of English language learning. The paper shares best practice and recommendations for flipping the teaching of English language learning in an English for Academic Purposes programme in a university setting.

Keywords: Flipped teaching, English language teaching, Higher education, Active learning, Egypt, L2.

1 INTRODUCTION

Learning experiences which challenge students and educators alike are taking higher education institutions to a new level of pedagogical practices. The worldwide call for radical transformation in teaching in higher education, aims to prepare both undergraduate and graduate students for their professional future and to close the skills gap in the job market. This paper aims to highlight the pedagogical benefits of flipped teaching in an English language programme and share the experience of using the flipped approach in teaching English language in a private higher education setting in Egypt.

The English Department at the British University in Egypt (BUE), in an effort to stimulate active learning in the English language classroom, adopted the flipped teaching approach for one semester. Implementing flipped teaching in its four level English for Academic Purposes (EAP) language programme, entailed revising lesson plans, modifying the teaching strategy, creating module material, and redesigning assessment. Adopting the flipped teaching approach was intended to provide students with a holistic interactive learning experience by replacing the usual classroom lecture. This paper will focus on the benefits of teaching using the flipped approach, how flipped teaching impacted L2 students' English language learning, which technical tools are effective for flipped teaching, student support strategies and assessment within a flipped teaching approach for language learning. The paper's scholarly approach explores the impact of technology on learning through reflection on teaching practice within one's own context. Evidence of learning and students' development were found in responses of students' interviews held by the English Department's Staff-Student Liaison Committee (SSLC), feedback from students on the e-learning forum and the module evaluations of the English programme.

1.1 Defining Flipped Teaching

Flipped teaching is part of a blended learning model where students manage their own time and pace (Staker & Horn, 2012) and are actively involved in constructing their learning process (Hamdan, Mcknight, McKnight, & Arfstrom, 2013).The flipped teaching approach is equally defined in "Using video lectures to make teaching more interactive" as "a hybrid approach to learning, using technology to move the classroom lecture to "homework" status and using face-to-face time for interactive learning" (Ronchetti, 2010). A flipped teaching approach is a redefinition of the role of the instructor and the role of the student.

The flipped approach was initially introduced in elementary and secondary education and was successfully implemented in the contexts of science (Bergmann & Sams, 2012), maths (Fulton, 2013), in Language (Fulton, 2013; Ullman, 2013) and in higher education settings with pharmacy students (Ryan, 2013). In its early stages, flipped teaching was referred to as the "inverted classroom" which appeared in the literature (Lage, Platt, & Treglia, 2000) as early as 2000; it is also termed by those who adopt the teaching approach as "guide on the side" (Frydenberg, 2013). It was further explored by two Colorado chemistry teachers Jonathan Bergmann and Aaron Sams in 2007. In their book *Flip Your Classroom: Reach Every Student in Every Class Every Day* (2012), they highlight the effectiveness of the flipped approach. The flipped teaching model is repeatedly referred to as an alternative model of instruction in which digital technologies are used to shift direct instruction from the group learning pace to the individual learning pace. Lectures are shifted out of the class hours in the form of screen-cast videos to introduce new concepts. The face to face class time, becomes an opportunity for students to work collaboratively with peers on projects, engage more deeply about concepts, practice language, integrate new knowledge, apply critical thinking skills and receive feedback from peers and instructors. Concepts in a flipped teaching approach are scaffolded through a variety of activities online and in the face to face class time. Such a framework facilitates the opportunity to ensure that every student is met at their readiness level. It is also an opportunity for students to gain "greater control over their own learning" (Hamdan, Mcknight, McKnight, & Arfstrom, 2013). Students in a flipped teaching context are the agents of their own learning as opposed to being the object of instruction.

Flipped teaching has often been confused with online distance learning; there are however, clear differences. Online distance learning, does not require teachers and students to meet face to face; teaching occurs remotely. Flipped teaching is a hybrid teaching and learning approach for delivery, it is a configuration of blended learning (Hamdan, Mcknight, McKnight, & Arfstrom, 2013). During flipped teaching face to face class time, "educators continually observe their students, provide them with feedback relevant in the moment, and continuously assess their work" (Gojack, 2012). Flipped teaching is a student-centered learning approach which focuses on active learning. The flexible framework of flipped teaching, allows students to access module content at their own time. The teaching process is accordingly paced to the learner giving students a sense of ownership and empowerment (Mok, 2014).

The instructional foundation of flipped teaching is supported by research which focuses on student centered learning and the effectiveness of the approach in increasing student achievement (Chaplin, 2009; Freeman, 2007; Michael, 2006; Akinoglu and Tandogan, 2006; Prince, 2004; Mazur, 1996). Research argues that flipped teaching as a student-centered approach, engages students to actively construct knowledge and help them build mental modes. Instruction outside of the classroom, primes students for the active learning tasks carried out in the flipped classroom. Research on the effects of priming on students' memory, indicates that "when learners are exposed to particular stimuli…their recall of that stimulus is improved to their previous experience with the stimuli (Powers, Bodie, & Fitch-Hauser, 2006). Research related to the Cognitive Load Theory, found a direct correlation between mental effort and the pre-training of students, fewer cognitive resources were needed to learn new material after receiving some form of before-class instruction (Musallam, 2010). Multiple studies have been cited by leading researchers such as J. Michael and E. Mazur highlighting that flipped teaching "maximise[s] the time available with the instructor and make[s] it possible to increase the focus on higher order thinking skills" (1996). It also allows interactional class opportunities for peer-instruction and peer feedback. In a traditional classroom setting, students "use such time for note taking" (Missildine, Fountain, Summers, & Gosselin, 2013). The flipped teaching pedagogy has been consistently rated in research as one of the "top trends in educational technology" (Watters, 2012).

2 STIMULATING ACTIVE LEARNING IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING USING THE FLIPPED APPROACH

Although learning with technology has greatly impacted the educational field, flipped teaching is relatively new to English second language learning in many higher education institutions in Egypt. Educators in Egypt, face many challenges, part of which is how to motivate students to become active learners. Flipped teaching was considered by the English Department at the BUE as a suitable pedagogical approach to stimulate active learning through the use of technology and develop learner autonomy.

The English Department implemented flipped teaching in two of the four modules of the English language programme (Advanced and Advanced Writing) during the first semester of the academic year 2015-16. The students registered on the modules were native speakers of Arabic, hence English was their second language. Flipping the Advanced and Advanced Writing modules meant that students would be exposed to the learning concepts outside of the classroom while face to face time, would be used to reinforce concepts through discussions, hands-on practice, pair work, assessment, and feedback from the instructor. Face to face time would take on a learner – led pedagogical approach where students were no longer allowed to be passive consumers. Marion Engin in 2014, conducted a study on flipping the classroom in a second language academic writing course; findings of the study shows that flipped teaching, gave L2 students the opportunity to learn in their own time and at their own pace. It was also noted that as students actively constructed their learning, the process gave them the responsibility of being active participants and the space to employ higher order thinking skills in and out of the English language classroom. Research on flipped classroom teaching, is generally in the STEM subjects (Berrett, 2012). There are no studies which highlight the implementation of flipped teaching in English language learning (Kulkulska-Hulme & Shield, 2009). This paper aims to fill in the gap in the literature and share a flipped teaching approach model in second language learning in an EAP programme in a private higher education institution in Egypt.

2.1 Context

The English Department at the BUE, caters to all students enrolled at the university. Students are placed in the programme according to their placement test score on entry. A total of 3000 students were registered on the programme for 2015-16. The lower levels of the programme (Intermediate and Upper Intermediate) used a blended learning approach, while the higher language levels of the programme implemented flipped teaching. The aim of this newly adopted approach to teaching the higher language modules, was to ensure students were actively engaged in the making of their own learning process. The duration of the module was one academic semester, a total of 13 weeks.

2.2 Student Participants

The ages of the students registered on the modules ranged between 17-21 years. There was no specific balance between the number of males and females in the learning classroom. All students registered on the Advanced and Advanced Writing modules were required to watch a screen-cast video created by the English Department explaining flipped teaching. The orientation included a robust face to face discussion of expectations and the signing of a student contract to ensure they understood their new role and responsibilities as leaners. Attendance requirements were also outlined in the contract. Many of the students had initial concerns about the teaching strategy and the workload. Research by Herreid and Schiller (2013) confirms that students may be resistant to a flipped approach, as they have to do more work out of class independently.

2.3 Teacher Participants

Teachers assigned to the Advanced and Advanced Writing modules were involved in the preparation for the flipped approach. Revising content, creating screen-casts and redesigning assessments consumed a substantial amount of time from team members. However, there was a common consensus among teachers that flipped teaching would help students learn how to invest their language learning time strategically. Teachers were additionally aware that students' levels of anxiety over the new learning strategy, might negatively affect their ability to learn. It is generally thought, that students' fear might cause them to hand in poorly completed assignments, result in inappropriate class behavior, miss tasks or become frequently absent (Bledsoe & Baskin, 2015). Logistics such as guaranteeing internet stability for a solid 13 weeks in some areas of Egypt, was however, a key concern for all.

3 HOW FLIPPED TEACHING IMPACTED L2 STUDENTS' ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING

The English Department modified its pedagogical approach to teaching English in the higher language levels of its EAP programme. This process entailed the redistribution of grades, reviewing portfolio content, designing e-learning online tasks, restructuring face to face lesson plans and modifying the weekly material. The tasks and materials of both modules were designed as scaffolds. The flipped approach allowed instructors to set clear parameters for students' active language learning and

concept processing. Weekly materials were divided into before class tasks, in class tasks and after class tasks.

The before-class tasks were mostly screen-cast videos embedded with non-graded short questions designed to aid students' understanding of new concepts. This allowed students to review concepts as often as needed outside of class in order to prepare for the face to face sessions. It also encouraged them to take ownership for their learning. Flipped tasks completed prior to class, provided instructors with important information about students' learning; which concepts required recapping during the face to face sessions, which students were struggling and which areas needed reinforcement. The data collected by instructors at this initial stage, allowed pre-planning to proactively take place and for instructors to be prepared to address the learning needs of their students in the face to face sessions. A key factor of quality teaching, is reaching every student and ensuring that students at the lower language level, are receiving the appropriate learning support while students at the higher end are being challenged to reach their full potential. Teachers who pre-plan based on the data collected from the flipped sessions, manage to not only help students master the module ILOs but also address differentiation in language learning. There is no assumption here that the road map for learning of one student is the same as the others. Proactive planning allows instructors to prepare alternatives which aim to facilitate for each student the opportunity to "learn as deeply as possible and as quickly as possible" within a group setting (Tomlinson C. , 2014).

Face to face sessions were accordingly freed up for active learning, group discussions, pair work, graded assessments, peer-instruction and instructor feedback. The in-class tasks ensured students had the opportunity to interact with peers and the instructor in order to deepen their understanding of newly learned concepts and practice language in a meaningful context. This model of "social scaffolding", views the learner as a "social being whose cognitive processing of the L2 is affected by social interactions ... with others, including those who provide L2 input and corrective feedback" (Tarone, 2007). The dynamics of social scaffolding in flipped teaching, supports the production of L2 in classrooms which "predominantly have a communicative orientation and corrective feedback" (Lyster & Mori, 2006), hence, students get a high return on the time and effort investment in learning English. The after class activities aimed to reinforce concepts, review content and facilitate language practice.

Students' individual academic progress was closely monitored by following up on the flipped tasks. There was clear evidence that students who completed the flipped tasks, mastered the learning objectives of each week. According to N. Ellis, "language processing is based on input frequency" (2002). Students who made the effort to tackle the flipped tasks, were able to effectively participate during the face to face group discussions, interact dynamically during pair work and perform better on their individual assessments. Students who diligently attempted all assigned tasks, showed a clearer understanding of assignment requirements, presented work of higher quality and performed better on assessments as evidenced by their grades and instructor feedback.

As second language learners, the students registered on the two modules, however, still made language errors related to the mechanics of academic writing and register. The modules although are skill based, also ensured that the underpinning language skills required for effective oral and written communication were reinforced through paraphrasing, summarising, synthesising, note-taking, debates, presentations, academic reading, and academic essay writing.

Through observation and student-teacher interviews, the main questions that were hoped to be answered by the end of the academic semester of 2015-16 were:

- Does flipped teaching stimulate active learning in the English language classroom?
- Does flipped teaching help students achieve the learning objectives of the module?
- How did students find learning through the flipped teaching approach on the higher language level modules?

3.1 Does flipped teaching stimulate active learning in the English language classroom?

The overall outcome of this revised pedagogical teaching approach was the stimulation of active learning in the English language classroom. The aim was ensuring a deeper understanding of new concepts and the reinforcement of the underpinning language skills for effective communication. It is noted in research that by emphasizing the socio-cultural aspect of language learning, through learner interaction with peers and instructors during face to face discussions, that there would be noticeable

academic progress. E. Tarone argues that students would progressively develop their language competence and performance (2007). The socio-cultural aspect of language learning at this point, would have additionally helped ensure a safe learning environment for the learners where the affective filter is lowered. With the affective filter lowered, the face to face sessions of the Advanced and Advanced Writing modules, became a stress free learning environment. The instructor in this new set up, was no longer the sole source of information; although, research does indicate that there are significant motivational benefits when input is made by the class instructor. It was observed that the pressure put on students to complete tasks prior to coming to class, yielded positive results. Students were involved in the learning process as producers of knowledge as opposed to simply being consumers of knowledge. Overall, there was a noticeable increase in the level of student interaction, motivation and in their learner autonomy.

3.2 Does flipped teaching help students achieve the learning objectives of the module?

Tasks on the Advanced and Advanced Writing modules were purposefully designed according to Bloom's taxonomy to cultivate students' higher order thinking skills (Krathwohl, 2002). Concepts which required understanding were flipped out of class. Higher order thinking skills which required activities such as analysis and evaluation, took priority in the face to face time. Class time was utilised for tackling the more complex skills of the modules. Allocating face to face time for students to present concepts learned to peers, showed that students had successfully comprehended the concepts introduced through the flipped sessions. The presentations and debates during class time were an indicator that students were additionally able to manipulate language to express ideas, employ a range of appropriately selected vocabulary and focus on form and language mechanics.

The interactive materials selected by module team members for each week, ensured that students achieved the modules' ILOs through active learning. Additionally, exposing students to explaining processes, evaluating and giving rationales for arguments, were found to stimulate learners' higher cognitive skills as well as develop learners' autonomy (Rodriguez, Frey, Dawson, Liu, & Rotzhaupt, 2012). There was an overall improvement in students' achievement levels and language development as evidenced by their grades on assignments and face to face class performance.

3.3 How did students find learning through the flipped teaching approach on the higher language level modules?

An online forum discussion was created at the end of the semester to ask students about what they thought of the flipped teaching approach. Students were also interviewed in the SSLC mid-way through the semester about how they felt about flipped teaching. Many students acknowledged, that it was beneficial to feel "pressured" to come to class prepared. Students reported enjoying the learning process despite the challenges of getting used to the flipped teaching approach. The ability to play screen-casts and videos as many times as needed was a feature of the flipped classroom which students greatly appreciated. Students who had weaker language skills but were hard working, admitted that the option of preparing at home, gave them the chance to ensure that they fully understood the concepts introduced in the flipped sessions. Re-watching the screen-casts also allowed them to feel more confident about their participation in class with their more advanced peers. A number of students pointed out that watching the screen-casts on their mobile devices, saved them time as they could watch it on the bus, during their lunch break or in between lectures. Students liked the embedded self-check quizzes and pre-knowledge tasks because they "alerted them of knowledge gaps and prompted them to review the corresponding videos again with clear objectives" (Mok, 2014). However, internet stability in newly suburban areas around Cairo was problematic for some students.

4 EFFECTIVE TECHNICAL TOOLS FOR FLIPPED TEACHING

4.1 Screen-casts & hot potato quizzes

The success of the flipped teaching approach is greatly dependent on the teaching tools selected. The nature of flipped teaching allows greater flexibility in utilising a variety of technological teaching tools. The most successful of these were the screen-cast videos used as short tutorials to introduce students to concepts before class and the hot-potato quizzes created on the university's e-learning system to test students' understanding. The duration of the videos were all under 10 minutes and many included

captions as an option. Hot potato quizzes were used to create self-check quizzes for students with answer keys and explanations. Investing time in creating the screen-casts and the embedded quizzes is time consuming but it is a long term investment as they would be reused in subsequent semesters.

4.2 Turnitin.com for developmental learning and flipped feedback

Flipped teaching is not just limited to viewing tutorials online, but includes using every opportunity of students' errors as a learning process. Students on the modules were required to submit their essays on Turnitin.com. The plagiarism detection tool, was also used by the instructors to help students gain a deeper understanding of academic honesty. Turnitin.com was not used to police students for plagiarism but rather to allow students to use the originality report to determine their areas of development with regards to in-text citation and integration of sources. The over-write feature on Turnitin.com enables students to view their errors, correct them and resubmit their work. The benefit is a developmental learning process of writing.

Moreover, instructors used Turnitin.com to give feedback to students online either through voice recording or written feedback. Research encourages virtual feedback using tools like Screencast–O-Matic to flip feedback (Martinez, 2016). Flipped feedback allows the instructor to record live the feedback on students' written assignments as a video. Students watch the video to follow the parts being highlighted on their essays and get an explanation through the commentary. The student can replay the feedback as frequently as needed (Hyland, 2006; Ferris, 1997).

4.3 Language bank and remedial activities

The English Department compiled an EAP language bank to target the development of the underpinning skills of language learning by L2 students. In an effort to boost the language learning opportunity of each student, instructors identify through the close monitoring of the pre-class tasks each student's language deficiencies and make a recommendation during the individualised feedback sessions with remedial activities that address their specific areas of development, hence addressing differentiation. The student is expected to complete the activities independently and check answer keys with explanations. It is also recommended that for further follow up that students meet with their instructor for additional guidance. The expected result would be an improvement in language over a sustained period of time.

4.4 Useful resources for flipped teaching

Tools that were use and found to be effective for flipped teaching include the following:

- Educanon (www.educanon.com) allows you to embed interactive questions in videos related to your topic. You can either select a pre-existing video or create one of your own.
- Educreations (www.educreations.com) creates content using a virtual whiteboard.
- Screencast (www.screencast.com) helps you capture output from computer screen as a video.
- Pow-Toon www.powtoon.com helps you create an animated video.
- Socrative (www.socrative.com) helps you create and use real-time quizzes online. You can create short answer or multiple choice questions with immediate feedback.
- Screen-O-Matic (https://screencast-o-matic.com/home) allows you to record on-screen activity for short tutorials, visual presentations, and communicate while you demonstrate.
- Flipped Learning Network (www.flippedlearning.org)

5   STUDENT SUPPORT STRATEGIES FOR FLIPPED TEACHING

The benefit of the flipped teaching, is that it balances the instructional methods in order to ensure an increased student comfort level and a willingness to learn. Creating the opportunity for students to be prepared for class through the flipped teaching approach, ensures students are not stressed or mentally overshadowed by apprehension (Bledsoe & Baskin, 2015) during face to face class time. Research shows that such support strategies are effective in promoting calmness during high-stress activities such as quizzes and group discussions (Bledsoe & Baskin, 2015). Support strategies on the Advanced and Advanced Writing modules included close monitoring of students' performance on the flipped tasks on a weekly basis, providing online individualised written or audio feedback via

Turnitin.com, in-class generic feedback on common errors, one on one conferencing during office hours, recommending EAP resources from the language bank to address differentiation and alerting students identified as being at risk either for the neglect of their academic studies or poor attendance. The Advanced and Advanced Writing modules' learning materials were designed to be communicative, engaging, meaningful, student centered and student paced; the flipped teaching approach, allowed the instructors to employ a combination of teaching strategies suitable for all learners.

Flipped teaching, in itself, is a student support strategy, it provides a balanced learning environment well suited for visual and auditory learners. At the same time, the structured group activities and pair-work in the classroom, actively engage kinesthetic learners. It goes without saying that the better we understand our learners and the differences in their learning styles, the better chance we as instructors have of meeting their diverse learning needs. It is important though to note, that "learning styles, are the result of a complex interaction of age, educational experience, and cultural background" (Hainer, Fagan, Baker, & Arnold, 1990). One of the added benefits of flipped teaching, is the accessibility of a variety of data about the learners which can be useful in the pre-planning stage to help in effectively meeting the learning needs of our students through addressing differentiation and considering their different learning styles.

6   ASSESSMENT WITHIN THE FLIPPED TEACHING APPROACH OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING

Assessment is a powerful tool that can be used for both learning and evaluation. However, traditional assessments do not always help instructors to accurately measure the language and content knowledge of English language learners (Jenelle, 2004). Assessments which are well designed, on the other hand, create meaningful opportunities for interaction about learning between instructors and their students. Assessment in the flipped English language modules at the BUE, were divided as follows: diagnostic tasks/quizzes, formative assessment to reinforce the learning process and summative assessment. The assessment strategy in the flipped English language modules, focused on helping students reinforce their learning process and solidify new concepts. Before class quizzes were mainly designed for concept checking. They were a means to guide students to identify which learning points required further attention and at the same time served as an evaluative tool to help instructors highlight key areas which needed reinforcement in the classroom. During face to face sessions, formative assessment took the form of scaffolded tasks. This form of layered assessment and the use of portfolios as a "process oriented assessment mechanism" (Ghoorchaei, Tavakoli, & Ansari, 2010), allowed students to exhibit what they have learned through a variety of formats. Assessment on the Advanced and Advanced Writing modules included quizzes, classroom discussions, debates, presentations, multiple drafting of written work, collaborative tasks, portfolios, self-evaluation and peer evaluation.

In redesigning the assessments for the flipped approach, special attention was paid to the wording of the assessment prompts. Prompts were carefully constructed so that students could better understand tasks and tackle them in chunks. Research on assessment in English language learning, consistently warns against the unnecessary linguistic complexity used in assessment which may hinder students' opportunities in demonstrating what they know (Abedi, 2009). Reducing the complexity of the prompts, is a form of scaffolding. However, in reducing linguistic complexity, one "should not reduce the opportunities for students to think and reason critically about high-level concepts" (Siegel, et al., 2014). The flipped non-graded assessments embedded within the modules' learning structures, helped students engage more fully in their learning process. There was clear evidence while marking their problem-solution essays of better analysis of complex issues. The use of the scaffolded formative assessment within this framework, served both as a learning tool for students and an evaluative method which takes into consideration the difference between students' independent thinking and the level of thinking which can they can reach with guidance and the scaffolding of tasks.

Assessments in the form of scaffolded tasks on the Advanced and Advanced Writing modules helped students follow up on their learning process in a developmental manner and aided instructors in collecting more accurate data about each student's learning on a weekly basis. No change or redesign was required for the summative assessment on the modules. The summative assessments carried the highest weighting in marks and were either a final unseen exam or a final research paper. Drawing on data collected from teacher and student interviews during the Staff-Student Liaison Committee (SSLC), before-class tests, post-class tests, face to face session observations and online forum

feedback indicated that the formative assessment format had positive influences on students' motivation and writing performance.

7 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Flipping a classroom is a major change in teaching pedagogy. Most people are resistant to change including faculty staff and students. For flipped teaching to work, it requires investing effort in highlighting the educational benefits to both academic staff and students. Much of the success of the flipped teaching approach, depends on obliterating the psychological obstacles to implementing the change. "By design, the flipped model places more emphasis on the importance of pre-class work to ensure that in-person class time is effective, allowing the instructor and the students to explore higher levels of application and analysis together" (Honeycutt, 2016). Expectations for students in a flipped teaching framework need to be appropriately communicated during the first teaching session. Clarifying expectations and connecting before class tasks to the initiation of in-class interaction, helps students see the value of before-class tasks and holds them accountable for being prepared for the face to face sessions. Asking students to watch a Pow-Toon video explaining flipped teaching before starting the semester can be very helpful in setting the stage for them to accept their new roles and responsibilities as learners. At the same time, ensuring consistent access to high speed internet is essential in enhancing the level of learner activity and reducing students' frustration.

The English Department at the BUE, in its effort to stimulate active learning for L2 language learners, substituted passive lecture techniques with active learning across all the levels of its' English language programme. It is believed and endorsed by research, that regardless of discipline, good teaching should always limit the passive transfer of knowledge in class while also promoting learning environments which build on student inquiry, collaboration and critical thinking (Mussallam, 2011). Flipped teaching has up to date, attracted little interest among educators and researchers in language teaching; accordingly, little to no research has rigorously studied whether flipping the language classroom can enhance L2 student learning. In an effort to add to the literature on flipped teaching in language learning, this paper has demonstrated the feasibility of the flipped teaching approach in language education and presented a structured approach on how to flip English language sessions using active learning strategies. Best practice shared in this paper, mirrors much of what is found in research conducted in STEM fields about active learning in that the flipped teaching approach, enabled language learners to "preview and review the content based on their needs and at their own pace, such as looking up words, studying unfamiliar concepts, and reading additional resources" (Guertin, Zappe, & Kim, 2007; Moravec et al., 2010). It can be said as a conclusion that the flipped teaching approach, has brought about positive change to the development of learner autonomy and student ownership towards learning in the language classroom. Higher levels of students' engagement were also observed during the face to face time. The possibility of replaying videos at any time and place, helped students better understand concepts which otherwise might have been difficult to grasp in a limited time during lectures. The flipped teaching model encouraged students who were weaker to learn at their own pace and be better prepared for face to face interaction with their peers and instructor. As a twenty-first century teaching approach which effectively utilises technology and active learning to transform students' learning experiences, flipped teaching effectively met the dynamic pace of the millennium generation (Fulton, 2012; Millard, 2012). Other benefits of the flipped teaching pedagogy were the individualised focus on developing the underpinning language skills of students which aid in effective communication through addressing differentiation and accommodating the diversity of students' learning styles.

The main aim of flipped teaching in the English language classroom, was to actively engage students in pre-class learning in order to boost in-class interaction and ultimately, help students achieve the module learning outcomes successfully. The English Department however, will need to continue to refine the implementation technique of this new pedagogical approach in order to ensure it maintains its standard of delivering high quality language teaching in higher education. The pedagogical potential of flipped teaching in second language education still requires further research.

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