

## Efficacy of Flipped Classroom and Literature in ESL And EFL: A Revision of a Case Study

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### ABSTRACT

We present here a case study that aims to determine to what extent Flipped Classroom is a valid way to introduce difficult and demanding reading texts in the ESL EFL classroom in a university course of English language. In the case of the study, the content objective is the introduction of the reading of passages from *Macbeth* written by William Shakespeare in a specialized university course for English language students whose linguistic competence is in the region of B2 CFRL. This study revisits some of previously obtained data and crosses these new items with new data gathered during the research described in this paper. We obtain some interesting findings that support the hypothesis that using alternative teaching methods, as Flipped Classroom, can be a valid tool to introduce demanding texts in an environment as the one here described.

**Keywords-** Education, English, Flipped classroom, Traditional teaching.

### I. INTRODUCTION

As contemporary research and leading researchers have proven and demonstrated, Flipped Classroom served as an effective tool to transform education into more interactive and online environments during the COVID-19 pandemic (Manganoska & Giannakos, 2019; Hoshang et al. 2021).

We could affirm that the flipped classroom can be described as a methodological tool and a didactic approach that can be used in very different situations (such as the one described above) because it is one of the most student-oriented tools available today (Defour, 2013; Taha, 2014; Yunus, 2021) as well as one of the most flexible tools available for teachers to improve the participation and motivations of their students (Yunus, 2021; González-Zamar & Abad-Segura, 2022 ; Divjak et al., 2022).

However, when approaching the academic study of the Flipped Classroom, it must be kept in mind that it is not a new concept born in the wake of the pandemic, even though most of its theoretical development and practical implementations occur during closures. pandemics described above.

It has also been interestingly emphasized in recent research that many educational institutions lowered their expectations towards their students' performance as teachers and instructors identified a lack of motivation that had a very negative impact on their teaching and learning process as a result, the acquisition of new knowledge was significantly less than expected in face-to-face learning (Campillo-Ferrer & Miralles-Martínez, 2016 in line with Nouri, 2016). Significantly, this situation coincided with the implementation of Flipped Classroom as the dominant methodology and the research, and researchers do not seem to have enough data to draw conclusions.

The traditional teaching pattern has been to assign students the task of reading textbooks and solving problems outside of school, while listening to lectures and taking tests in class (Craw-ford et. al 2020).

In flipped instruction, students first study the topic on their own, usually using video lessons prepared by the teacher or third parties. In class, students apply knowledge by solving problems and doing practical work. The teacher coaches students when they get stuck, rather than delivering the initial lesson in person. Complementary techniques include differentiated instruction and project-based learning (Macías, 2023a).

Teachers are combining the benefits of flipped learning with traditional in-class lectures through tools that keep students accountable for video lessons at home through time-integrated formative assessments (Tucker, 2012).

Flipped classrooms offer free class time for practical work. Students learn by doing and asking questions. Students can also help each other, a process that benefits both advanced and less advanced students.

Investing, in this sense, the classroom also changes the allocation of the teacher's time. Traditionally, the teacher interacts with students who ask questions, but those who do not tend to need the most attention. This model, flipped classroom, changes teachers from "sages on the stage" to "guides on the sidelines," allowing them to work with individuals or groups of students throughout the session (Baral, 2021; Rosenberg, 2013).

The essential reason for this teaching method is that teachers can spend time working with students who need their help in the classroom and students can work together to solve problems instead of staying home alone with a job. that they may not understand and with no one to ask for help (Nolan, 2021; Strelan, 2020).

We present here a case study that aims to determine to what extent the flipped classroom model (Flipped Classroom, in its original name in English according to Sams and Bergmann, 2013) is a valid way of introducing difficult and demanding reading texts in the classroom. of English as a second language and English as a foreign language at the university level.

To evaluate the fulfillment of the proposed objective in this case of the study, the success of the model will be tested by introducing reading passages from Macbeth, written by William Shakespeare, in a specialized university course for C1 level English students.

In previous experiences with students with a similar profile, the introduction of demanding and difficult texts has been an obstacle in the teaching-learning process (Macías, 2022; Macías 2023b). For this reason, we intend to explore the possibilities that the inverted classroom can offer to overcome the difficulties previously experienced, which had considerably hindered the process of learning and teaching language and culture content with difficult and demanding texts.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Education, like any other human activity, has benefited from the arrival of ICT (Information and Communications Technologies). The benefit that ICT can have in Education has been widely studied, discussed and finally proven to be effective (Adam & Metjack, 2021; Azmi, 2017; Duo-Terrón et. al, 2022; Lidström & Hemmingsson, 2014; Marín -Marín, 2022).

The arrival and impact of ICT helped to implement new teaching strategies and pedagogical approaches to teaching. In this context, Sams and Bergmann founded and introduced the term Flipped Classroom. These two experts maintain that the arrival of ICT in Education studies could put an end to endless centuries of teachers asking their students to be prepared for their classes. In his opinion, the ultimate goal of Flipped Classroom is to minimize traditional teaching time by maximizing the potential for students to acquire knowledge outside of class, which inevitably leads to less traditional use of time in class.

Thus, Flipped Classroom – or Inverted Classroom – aims to overcome the challenges that time and space contribute to creating in the teaching and learning process (Du, 2018).

Du (2018) defines Flipped Classroom by focusing on its transformative and innovative character: the traditional teacher-centered core of the classroom is flipped and inverted into a student-centered core lesson when students are provided with materials and resources with which they can learn before the actual class takes place, in other words, the transfer of knowledge occurs through approximation and investigation – related to learning by doing – this, following some recent research, allows using the time of class in a more effective way as subsequent research has shown (Carhill-Poza, 2019).

As very relevant research such as that of Du (2018) and Carhill-Poza (2019) maintains, we can attribute the popularity of distance, blended and inverted teaching methodologies to the possibilities they offer when trying to overcome the difficulties and traditional failures of the most traditional teaching methods; These innovative methodologies seem to be free of problems of time limitations, since they allow content learning to be assigned outside the classroom (Muldraw, 2013; Rahman et al. 2019; Zainuddin 2017).

One of the many advantages of Flipped Classroom is to reverse the traditional sequence in the teaching-learning process: the traditional content of the class is no longer presented in the form of a talk; It can be presented directly through video-recorded lessons, or students can be expected to discover the content by exploring and investigating through homework activities (Basal, 2015). This leads to a non-traditional use of class time, which can be used for discussions, questions, doubts, experiments or any other complementary activity that improves the learning process of the contents already explored by students. (Amresh et. al 2013).

All the above characteristics and procedures about Flipped Classroom as a pedagogical approach to teaching as an effective teaching method are included in the most accepted definition of Flipped Classroom:

A pedagogical approach in which direct instruction moves from the group learning space to the individual learning space and the resulting group space is transformed into a dynamic, interactive learning environment where the educator guides students as they apply concepts and engage creatively in the matter (Bergman & Sams, 2013, p.15).

It has also been stated that another great advantage of the Flipped Classroom is that it can cause a change of mentality in students and students: if applied and followed correctly, the objective is no longer to complete the task but to understand it. (Bergmann and Sams, 2013). This has interesting pedagogical implications, as it suggests that Flipped Classroom can be effectively linked to modern perspectives on pedagogical scaffolding such as those proposed by Gao (2016) and Rajaram (2019), among other academics and theorists dedicated to educational studies.

These new alternative models propose that effective learning only occurs in a context in which educators and teachers accompany and guide students, but do not instruct them. On the contrary, they should serve as a guiding figure in the process of learning by doing and discovering, enhancing their abilities and imagination but avoiding formal instruction and traditional lectures.

However, recent research has also stated that Flipped Classroom, although it can be very beneficial, is not without risks. Some researchers argue that the methodology relies too much on the learning process on the students themselves and does not consider the differences between different individuals who may belong to the same group but who may not have the same capabilities and abilities to explore the content. target nest. with the same depth (Sakulprasertsri, 2017) or with the same resources, some may not even have personal access to the minimum ICT requirements (Yavuz & Ozdemir, 2019). This pre-pandemic research reaches the same conclusions and findings as the United Nations (2021) and OECD (2020) surveys carried out during the Covid-19 lockdowns.

The flipped classroom model can also be seen as an element with the capacity to energize education and educational situations. Recent research studies have reached a clear conclusion: when applied correctly in the right environment, Flipped Classroom tends to be one of the most flexible tools available for teachers to improve the engagement and motivation of their students (Abad - Segura, 2022; Divjak et al., 2022; González-Zamar, 2020; Yunus, 2021).

### III. METHODOLOGY

We present here a case study that aims to determine to what extent (if at all) Flipped Classroom is a valid way to introduce difficult and demanding reading texts in the ESL and English classrooms. as a foreign language at the university level. In the case of the study, the content objective is the introduction of the reading of passages from *Macbeth* written by William Shakespeare in a specialized university course for English language students.

As this is a revision study of an already existing line of investigation conducted by the same researcher previous experiences with students with a similar profile, the introduction of demanding and difficult texts has repeatedly been an obstacle in the teaching-learning process, and we intend to explore the possibilities that the Flipped Classroom can offer to overcome the difficulties previously experienced that They had considerably hindered the learning and teaching process with difficult and demanding texts.

To achieve the aforementioned objectives in this study, we have posed the following two research questions, which guide and limit the nature of the study:

-Is the performance of students exposed to Flipped Classroom better than that of those who follow a more traditional methodology?

-Is the Flipped Classroom related to the perceived effectiveness of a study program and students' motivation to participate in it when it is challenging?

By answering these questions, we hope not only to fulfill the two main objectives of this case study, but also to better understand the dimension of Flipped Class as an active methodology. This will also allow us to explore students' perception of the possibilities of implementing Flipped Classroom as a stable methodology in their educational system, not only as a resource or combined with other pedagogical approaches dedicated to helping enhance their skills and abilities.

Inevitably, since this case study takes an empirical approach to applying and implementing Flipped Classroom as a tool to improve the reading proficiency of university students, it will also help us understand teachers' perception of its effectiveness. of the tool compared to other tools. used on other occasions, with special attention to individual variation and individual performance.

In a context like the one already described in this work; The main problem identified is clearly the demonstrated difficulty and apathy that students perceive and feel when approaching themselves. In this particular context, it is inevitable to ask ourselves the following question: is it the reading of difficult texts that causes apathy in students and makes them feel unmotivated, or is it the selected methodology?

To answer the previous question, we propose the following analysis method:

**1. The class is divided into two subgroups of participants:**

Group 1 or intervention group follows classes according to the flipped classroom model:

At home: reading passages from Macbeth as homework. This is accompanied by: support videos, podcasts, vocabulary explanations, explanation of complex literary terms, comprehension tests and questionnaires.

Group 2 or the non-intervention group followed a traditional approach to reading and understanding complex texts: reading in class and on-site discussion of specific questions about text comprehension and reading tests.

In this first stage of the project, both groups are administered the same pre-test to assess their prior knowledge on the subject to be tested.

**2. Anonymous satisfaction and perceived effectiveness survey:**

An anonymous questionnaire with four questions is carried out to collect significant data on satisfaction and perceived effectiveness of the projects. These questions are: (i) are you completely satisfied with the development of the project? (ii) are you satisfied with the project monitoring modality? (iii) Do you consider your modality to be the most effective within the project?, (iv) ) Do you consider the project an effective alternative?

**3. Data collection:**

Formative and summative data were collected from students' task packages (comprehension texts, quizzes, and reading tests). However, to validate the results obtained and to test the effectivity of both teaching systems all the participants were requested to complete a final quiz. In this quiz, the researcher monitored the main elements implied in text comprehension in a context of university studies of English language, these include plot understanding, character analysis, theme identification, quote analysis, critical thinking and identification of irony within the text, among others.

**4. Data analysis:**

All data from the two groups were transferred to descriptive statistics to check to what extent the scores differ, and an additional test was administered to all the participants to gather information about the degrees of effectiveness is perceived in each group and in the project.

## **IV. RESULTS**

This case study has reached some interesting results that have helped us draw some conclusions about the study carried out. One of the most significant conclusions we have reached is related to participation in the study. Because the study was conducted in what are typically considered seminar classes, students and

alumni could not be required to attend all classes or complete all assignments.

As a result of what we have mentioned above, those who followed Flipped Classroom may have identified the potential for face-to-face discussion and scaffolding (Milman, 2014; Rajaram, 2019) necessary to fully activate all the benefits this method can offer.

The members of the intervention group benefited from their attendance at the face-to-face classes, unlike those who followed a more traditional method, who attended the proposed seminars less. This may be one of the reasons why those who followed Flipped Classroom and a non-traditional approach attended classes and completed the requested tasks at a much higher rate (90%) than those who did not follow the flipped methodology (75%).

Another conclusive finding that we can highlight is that, even though the attendance and participation of the non-intervention group was lower (as seen in graph one), their score in the summative and formative tests (session and task) of reading was significantly higher. elderly.

The intervention group achieved an average of 92% on the tests, while the non-intervention group achieved 81%. One of the reasons that may explain this fact is tradition. Traditionally, students perceive more of a need to study class material than that presented alternatively (Song & Kapur, 2020; Towey, 2010).

In contrast to the previous significant finding, we can see that in overall performance (represented by the results on the final assessment test) the group that followed a more traditional approach to teaching difficult reading obtained a higher score than those who followed the Flipped Classroom methodology (78% vs 70%). One of the many reasons that may explain this fact is that, as we have already pointed out, the perception of class content and tradition seems to be identified with the study and learning of content rather than with materials and data presented in more alternative and alternative ways. interactive (Song & Kapur, 2020).

However, although the intervention group obtained lower scores in the summative and formative tests (as seen in graph 2), the group that followed the Flipped Classroom methodology acquired better peripheral knowledge (important data related to the topic and reading) and showed better performance in the formative tests applied during the different sessions.

This is a very significant finding because the intervention group achieved a higher percentage (95%) on the formative questionnaires (questions relating to test passages) even though their text comprehension questionnaires showed that their text comprehension was almost equivalent. (60% and 65%).

This seems to demonstrate that Flipped Classroom multiplies the possibilities for students to exploit their resources and that, as recent research affirms, knowledge acquired through flipped

methodologies is likely to remain longer in students' memory (Ming et al., 2020; Su & Fan, 2021).

The aforementioned results related to the understanding of the text, however, seem not to be related to the prior knowledge that the participants may have of the work, the era and the life of the author, since the results in the pre-test administered show very similar results in both groups (40% and 42%).

## V. CONCLUSION

This study sheds some light on the state of the art of Flip-ped Classroom when applied to the introduction of difficult and demanding texts in a university context.

It is undeniable that, although Flipped Classroom has many classroom-oriented implications and serves as an effective tool to introduce and explore concepts and theories and to improve student attention and participation, it turns out to be an ineffective tool to solve the identified problem. in this studio. And, consequently, considering the results obtained, it may not be the most effective tool to introduce very demanding reading texts (such as Macbeth) in the ESL/EFL classroom.

However, given the small population of this study that we present here (66 students), we do not intend to draw universal conclusions and, therefore, we cannot demonstrate, nor is it our intention, that the Flipped Classroom is a harmful method.

Contrary to what was expected, many of the results obtained in the study indicate a very similar level of performance with a much higher degree of satisfaction and enjoyment, which should not be dismissed as simply superficial, but should be considered. counts to produce more engaging classes, lectures and lessons that help reduce the identified apathy towards difficult and demanding texts.

Recent research shows that motivation and enjoyment ultimately lead to better results (Gómez, Wu & Passerini, 2009; Mohammad-Davoudi & Parpuchi, 2016; Todaka, 2020) and this shows that Flipped Classroom can be an effective tool not only in the English as a Second and Foreign Language classroom, but also in any other area of knowledge and subject of the educational system.

It is evident that Flipped Classroom, as a pedagogical approach, has the potential to revolutionize the educational system and allocate part of the teaching-learning process outside the classroom, this is the main reason why the link between difficult reading texts and demanding and the methodology and its procedures must be and will be explored in future research.

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