

Flipped Classroom for EFL Learners: A Study at Daffodil International University

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***Abstract:** This paper tends to investigate whether EFL learners are developing their language skills as a result of the using of Flipped Classroom as a pedagogical strategy at Daffodil International University or not. At the beginning, an overview of Flipped Classroom is given; then, the paper examines the perspectives of both the teachers and the students regarding their use of Flipped Classroom. Thirdly, an analysis of the survey on Flipped Classroom is discussed. And finally, suggestions are made to ensure the highest benefit of EFL students from the Flipped Classroom. The researchers try to show how Flipping Classroom can improve EFL learners' skills.*

***Keywords:** English as a foreign language, Tertiary level, Watch Summarize and Question, Flipped Learning Network.*

1. Introduction

English Language teachers are trying to accelerate the learning of their learners since ages. In this process they have gone through different strategies and techniques. English language teachers at Daffodil international University are also practicing varied classroom strategies to enhance their skills. But when it comes to practical implementation what has been seen is, teachers go to the classes, they give lectures, students follow the lectures, they take when possible notes, they practice some elementary things in the class hour, at the end of the hour they are given homework. Most of the time many questions unanswered and teachers are actually

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aware of the matter. They know that many students fail to understand the lectures, but they don't have the opportunity to support them after the scheduled class time. In the following class teachers check the homework assignments and briefly review the previous class, but they cannot manage time to answer to the additional questions of the students. They always have a lot of materials to cover before the midterm and semester final examinations.

Even though, there is an everlasting conflict about the choice and effectiveness of classroom strategies, DIU teachers are now changing their views. Maximum teachers now understand that the needs of learners. So teachers are now giving emphasize on finding out ways for personalized students' learning, using different kinds of technological tools. But this can have only a limited effect on students if teachers follow the traditional teaching methods. In this regard DIU is initiating Flipped Learning pedagogy. In flipped learning model, students are given some materials before the classes on video or text form. Students study them in their own free time and get an overview of the contents of the next class. Thus they get a pre idea and knowledge of the class. And during the class time teachers help them to explore more on the class materials. Students generally discuss with their peer and try to learn from others. DIU is a technology-oriented university, and all of its campuses have computer labs and Wi-Fi facilities. In addition, most of its students have laptops and smart phones. Therefore, the lessons could be delivered to them in a convenient form.

2. Flipped Learning

In Flipped Learning teachers do not give direct lectures to the students in group, rather teacher creates an environment where students get opportunities to learn individually at their own time. And during the class time students are involved in active problem solving activities. Teachers guide them in their peer works or group works. So basically learners watch the lesson videos or read text material as many times as they need to fully understand the content(s). And then comes to the class with full preparation to discuss with peers or work in groups and learn better.

3. Literature Review

Flipped classroom is a reverse model of traditional classroom teaching. Here

homework is done before joining the class. Online class materials are given before the class. Students study them. Get preliminary ideas on the lesson and then come ready to the class for practical works. As stated by Novak and Patterson (1998), it is a model that combines online materials with classroom activities. It helps teachers to understand the actual needs of students. Accordingly teacher can plan the materials and activities for students for their better learning. Teachers also can provide feedback and help students to explore more on the target lesson.

The concept of flipped classroom is said to be introduced by two rural Colorado chemistry teachers, Jonathan Bergmann and Aaron Sams in 2007. They started to record their classes for their students. Then they used to upload their classes videos on You Tube. Those who missed their classes because of their other involvements could watch them later. Their concept was 'Reach Every Student in Every Class Every Day'. In their book called 'Flip the Class', Bergmann and Sams (2012), mentioned that in their flipped classroom, students were more active and more interacting with other students. In their flipped classes class time was spent in more flexible way. Those students who need more attention were able to get that. And the advanced students were able to progress more.

They also begun 'The Flipped Learning Network in 2014. Flipped classrooms flipped the group learning space to individual learning space" (p.1). This gave their students opportunities to improve their critical thinking ability. They were also able to comprehend more during their class time. Students were working in groups to solve real life problems as they were achieving deeper knowledge and understanding power (New Media Consortium, 2014, p.36). During the class time teachers were able to guide and instruct their students to better apply their knowledge and could engage themselves in creative activities on the lesson topic. (Flipped learning Network, 2014, p.1). So we can understand that in flipped classes teachers can help their students to engage them in better ways with the use of technologies. The learning experience of students can be made better in this way.

In the flipped classroom, the teacher creates a flexible environment where students can be engaged in various online learning activities even before joining the scheduled class time. And during the class time students are fully focused on active learning. As cited in Meeting Abstracts (2013), Elliott, Suda, Hamilton, Curry, and Byrd (2013) found that when students were

spending less time in their self-directed homework outside their class time, they were getting less scores and grades. This research outcome supports the idea of integrating out-of-class self-learning activities which better prepare students for in-class activities.

In flipped learning, students are more engaged in their learning process. To get prepared for the classes, students give more time at home or out of the classroom in their studies. They watch pre-loaded lecture videos online and study other related materials before joining the schedule classes. This helps them to become autonomous learners. They become more self-dependent learners. Teachers get more time during the class to guide the students more to learn better. Teachers can guide and give individual instructions to individual students resulting better learning.

4. Problem Statement

Currently, the general impression of Flipped Learning is that it is one of the most effective pedagogical language learning strategies in the outside world. But if we consider in the background of Daffodil International University, we still need to find out its present scenario and effectiveness as a whole. It is obvious that the potentials are boundless, but we need to identify the pros and cons this flipped learning in DIU. How many teachers and students are aware of this strategy and how many of them actually using it, we need to find out. The researchers also eager to identify the strengths and limitations of Flipped instructions. This will help DIU to maximize the use of it to make our learners more skilled in English Language. This research aims to prepare proper suggestion that can ensure the best use of flipped learning to best ensure the maximum learning of students of Daffodil International University.

5. Research Design and Methodology

Subjects

This research was done with randomly selected one hundred and twenty students of tertiary level from five sections of the Department of Computer science and Engineering. These students all EFL learners.

Instruments

To conduct this research, one questionnaire for the students was used. The questionnaire consists of ten close ended questions and four open ended questions related to the research questions stated in the introduction.

6. Data Collection and Analysis

The data for the research were collected from one hundred and twenty EFL learning at the tertiary level in DIU. The researchers individually communicated with each of the students. Then they explained the purpose of this study and make them understand every question. They also gave necessary instructions to the respondents and collected the data. The collected data was then scored manually for analysis.

Questionnaire

There were ten close ended questions and four open ended questions in the questionnaire. The questions were related to various aspects of Flipped Learning. The analysis of the responses of the 120 students are given item-wise in the below sections:

The first question was ‘Flipped classroom is more engaging than a traditional classroom instruction’.

Table: 1

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Flipped classroom is more engaging than a traditional classroom instruction	0%	0%	3.57%	28.57%	75%

N=120

In Table: 1 we can see that maximum number of 75% students strongly agreed that Flipped classroom is more engaging than a traditional classroom instruction, 28.57% agreed on the formula and only 3.57% neither agreed nor disagreed. But interestingly none of the students disagreed or strongly disagreed with this idea. This result indicates that if teachers use the flipped learning strategy it will surely engage students in learning than the previous techniques.

The next question was ‘Flipped classroom gives students greater opportunities to communicate with other students’.

Table: 2

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Flipped classroom gives students greater opportunities to communicate with other students	1%	1%	0%	28.57%	69.43%

N=120

The findings of Table: 2 are closely linked to the communication of the students with their fellow students. Maximum students (69.43%+28.57%) = 98% felt that Flipped classroom gives students greater opportunities to communicate with other students. This result suggests that if the teachers flip their classes that would give the students more opportunities to be communicative.

The third question was 'I (the students) watch the class materials on time'.

Table: 3

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I watch the class materials on time	0%	23.57%	17.14%	49.29%	10%

N=120

The statistics in Table: 3 show a varied result. Although (49.29%+10%) = 59.29% agreed or strongly agreed, 23.57% disagreed and 17.14% were unsure about this. So there were mixed reactions about their way of watching the materials on time. In this issue the teachers can motivate them well and assign them some in lecture homework which will induce them to watch the materials on time.

The fourth question for the respondents was 'I like watching the lessons on video format'.

Table: 4

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I like watching the lessons on video format	0%	0%	3.57%	25%	71.43%

N=120

In Table: 4, the researchers found that most of the students (25%+71.43%) = 96.43% liked the lessons to watch in video format. Only 3.57% disagreed with the notion. The result shows that in Flipped learning learners love to get their lesson materials in video format. Students can also watch the video several times in their own pace. If anyone feels like watching the lectures again and again he is free to do so.

The fifth question was designed as ‘After watching the video I feel confident before joining the classes’.

Table: 5

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
After watching the video I feel confident before joining to the class	0%	0%	3.57%	39.29%	57.14%

N=120

As shown in Table: 5, most of the students (39.29%+57.14%) = 96.43% more or less agreed with the statement. Students felt confident before joining the class, yet 3.57% could not resolve it. Flipped learning gives opportunities to study various kinds of materials for individual learners to practice the various language skills.

The sixth question was formed as ‘I am spending less time working on traditional HW’.

Table: 6

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I am spending less time working on traditional HW	0%	21.43%	10.71%	39.29%	32.12%

N=120

As shown in Table: 6, only 21% students disagreed to this proposition. And the maximum number of students (71.41%) agreed. It shows that learners are less interested to spend their time on traditional HW because of following Flipped strategy.

In the questionnaire, the seventh question was stated as ‘Social media is an important part in the students learning.’

Table: 7

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Social media is an important part in my learning	0%	0%	1%	38%	61%

N=120

As shown in Table: 7, 61% students strongly agreed whereas 38% agreed with the statement. Only 1% was not sure about it. This shows that Social media plays important role in the learning process of students.

The eighth point of the questionnaire of students was planned to decide whether students are motivated to learn language using Flipped strategy or not

Table: 8

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I am motivated to learn language using this strategy	0%	0%	0%	50%	50%

N=120

Table: 8 surprisingly show that all the students who took part in the survey are motivated to learn language using Flipped strategy.

The ninth assertion in the questionnaire was designed as ‘Students have found the WSQ discussions at the beginning of the class helpful’.

Table: 9

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I have found the WSQ discussions at the beginning of the class helpful.	1.86%	4%	3.57	24.57	66

N=120

In Table: 9, researchers do find that maximum students, that means 66% students strongly agreed that WSQ discussions at the beginning of the class helpful, 24.57% agreed on the formula and only 3.57% neither agreed nor disagreed. Only 5.86% disagreed or strongly disagreed with this hypothesis. So it is clear that if teachers do WSQ discussions at the beginning of the class helpful for the students.

The tenth item of the survey was set as ‘I (students) would not recommend Flipped classroom to a friend’.

Table: 10

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I would not recommend Flipped classroom to a friend	78.57%	21.43%	0%	0%	0%

N=120

As exhibited in Table: 10, 21.43% students more or less disagreed with this

statement while a maximum of 78.57% strongly disagreed with this. It indicates that learners are enjoying Flipped strategy and they will recommend it to friends.

The next component of the survey was framed an open ended question, some of the students answered to it. The answers are listed below in Table 11. Similar answers are omitted from the table.

Table: 11

The question was: What are the positive outcomes of the Flipped Classroom?

Answers posted by students:
i) In one sentence we can say "The Flipped classroom approach is the answer for future learning.
ii) I found a great motivation from flipped classroom.
iii) We can learn lesson in on flipped classroom
iv) It encourages us to learn language using this classroom.
v) After watching materials we feel confident.
vi) Flipped classroom is the easiest way to learn English.
vii) We can learn how to communicate with others easily.
viii) We can even talk about classroom material before class time.
ix) We can communicate with other students thus makes us more friendly and united.
x) We feel that flipped classroom is more engaging than traditional classroom.
xi) One of the most important outcomes of flipped classroom is we can overcome from our shyness and be confident to talk in front of audience.
xii) Flipped classroom removes our nervousness.
xiii) I am motivated to learn language in the flip classroom
xiv) It gives me greater opportunities to communicate with other students
xv) I am motivated to learn language using this strategy.
xvi) It is better and enjoyable than traditional classroom
xvii) There are many positive outcomes of the flipped classroom. We watch the class materials, video, before the class. it is the important part in my learning, it gives me to help my proper learning
xviii) In this Strategy students have more control and it promotes student centered learning. Students also use social media to learn and make a positive output of it. It can be more efficient. We can take preparation before the class and be confident about it.
xix) Flipped classroom makes us punctual.
xx) The flipped classroom is very much enjoyable and need less time to make my lesson.
xxi) It is very much effective to gather new knowledge in short time.
xxii) Flipped classroom is very important for us for better study. We can know about our further class activities before we come to our class.
xxiii) I learn and learn more in the classroom

N: 23

Table: 11 demonstrates that students like flipped classroom very much and they are highly motivated to learn English language following this strategy. They have found out many positive aspect of Flipped classroom.

The next open ended question of the questionnaire was about the drawbacks of Flipped learning. Some of the students answered to it. The answers are listed below in the table. Similar answers are omitted from the table.

Table: 12

Question	Answers
What are the drawbacks of the Flipped Classroom?	i) There is no drawback in FC. b) ii) If sometime we cannot get information then we could not take good preparation for class. iii) Many students do not take it seriously. d) iv) Someone who is beyond the reach of internet will face some problems with it as it is social media based. v) Sometime we spend much time in Flipped classroom
	vi) I don't think there is any drawback in flipped classroom vii) Flipped classroom is not recognized. viii) Some students gossip when they are given group work. ix) Flipped classroom is wasting of time. x) Sometimes few of the students do not check their material in flipped classroom. xi) Flipped classroom is all about course material, if any material would not get in proper time then it is valueless xii) Flipped classroom is waste of valuable time xiii) Many students cannot understand the grammatical usage of English Language

N=13

Table: 12 shows that although students are motivated about Flipped classroom, they found a few drawbacks. Some of them raised the question about internet facilities. Some found it as time consuming, while some of the students thought that a few students were irresponsible regarding the materials of Flipped classroom.

The next open ended question of the questionnaire was about the improvement of Flipped learning. Some of the students answered to it. The answers are listed below in Table 13. Similar answers are omitted from the table.

Table: 13

Question	Answers
What can we add to improve learning in the Flipped Classroom?	i) We can add video conference system ii) We can add more and more video clip about different discussion in flipped classroom iii) We can add an open discussion session so that we can practice more freely and friendly iv) We can add English movie v) We can watching the lesson on video so that we can improve our learning more vi) After showing the video we can discussed on it in classroom vii) Sometime the speech is so fast that we cannot get this, if the conversation is little bit slow it will be more useful for us viii) We can add multimedia video so that it becomes more easier to us ix) I like to spend more time in flipped classroom, if we get a fixed time for it then we can finish our task by time. x) More examples should be added in flipped classroom xi) We can add new technologies in the classroom to improve learning

N=11

Table: 13 shows that although students are highly inspired about Flipped classroom, they are coming up with different suggestions about improving the present conditions of Flipped Classroom.

The last section of the questionnaire was elicited comments about Flipped Classroom. Many of the students have given their comments. The comments are listed below in Table 14. We have omitted those comments which were similar, from the table.

Table: 14

Question	Answers
Further comments about the Flipped Classroom.	i) I like flipped classroom very much specially the teachers who take this course ii) Flipped is better for us iii) It is very useful iv) It's a good world to learns new things

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> vii) Good and helpful for us viii) Flipped classroom is very useful for students ix) Flipped classroom should be taken more seriously x) I would recommend my friend to get used with flipped classroom xi) It is very good step xii) I like this process very much
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N=12

Table: 14 exhibits that students are getting benefit from Flipped learning and they are coming forward to make comments on it. Teachers should take their comments seriously and take steps for those.

7. Findings

The analysis of responses of the study mentioned above lead us to the assumption that Flipped learning strategy is very much helpful for effective language learning. But it is very much important that teachers need to be sincere and serious about posting and watching the learning materials. Another finding of the study is that Flipped learning creates chances for students to become independent autonomous learners. The study also demonstrates that positive impact of Flipped learning can be doubled when learners are provided with proper guidelines by the educators. This research also shows that Flipped learning positively effects the learning process of EFL learners. Learners learn better, learners learn effectively when they are allowed to learn independently. When students can select the learning materials by themselves they are more focused on their studies and they become more motivated to give more time to their studies. This doubles their learning. They also involve themselves in more active learning activates, this give positive results in their learning and grades also. But there are some limitations that need to be solved. The technical supports like internet support and computer or other related devices need to be ensured. Proper guidelines and motivation should be provided to the learners. Authentic, interesting and effective materials should be selected and provided for students. If teachers can ensure these it is possible to bring gout the best results from Flipped learning.

8. Recommendations

The analysis of the above mentioned findings indicates that flipped classes have positive impact on students' language learning. So, to ensure the maximum benefit out of Flipped learning the researchers are recommending the following suggestions:

1. Authentic and needed learning materials should be provided to the learners in due time.
2. Learners should be provided with necessary technical devices with high speed internet connections.
3. Proper training should be ensured both for teachers and students.
4. Learners should be motivated to watch the materials on time.
5. Sufficient and proper learning materials should be provided to the learners beforehand.
6. Teachers should devise proper classroom activities for the learners to practice higher order thinking skills.

9. Conclusion

Flipped Learning is definitely a helpful EFL pedagogy that can be followed in this current situation. There are some issues and limitation that need to be addressed and solved to maximize the benefit of this. We also need to change our traditional mindset of teaching and learning to get into this new movement. But, we can say for sure that Flipped Learning is a positive movement in higher education. Many of the DIU teachers are using this pedagogical strategy to accelerate their students' higher order thinking skills and this is working positively in DIU.

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