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Using the flipped classroom to teach educational models in english at the education national university (UNAE) of Ecuador

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ABSTRACT

Objective: Studies of the use of flipped learning in the Ecuadorian educational context are limited. The overall aim of this study was to propose a methodology based on the use of the flipped classroom to teach the subject Educational Models in English.

Method: A bibliographic review about the flipped classroom was carried out. Using the collected information, a methodology was elaborated and put into practice and evaluated by means of an action research process.

Results: The results revealed a methodology that includes steps and procedures to implement flipped learning in the teaching of Educational Models in English at UNAE.

Conclusion: Based on the results, it can be concluded that the proposed methodology proved to be successful to teach the aforementioned subject in English.

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Educational models; flipped classroom/learning; methodology

Introduction

The Education National University (UNAE) in Azogues, Cañar, Ecuador is a new emblematic higher education institution, where students are trained in Spanish to become teachers of Basic General Education, Early Childhood Education, Intercultural Education and Special Education. The pedagogical model from this university (Pérez Gómez, 2015) includes, as one of its pedagogical principles, to promote the flipped classroom as a way to maximize the digital resources and social networks in the teaching learning process of the university. The curriculum design includes a general training on pedagogy for all the majors. Educational Models is one of the main subjects included in the third semester of all majors, while English as a Foreign Language is taught during the first six terms of each major. Educational Models and English as a Foreign Language are the object of study in this paper.

When students complete the sixth semester of English, they have to sit a proficiency test to prove that they have reached the B1 level according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Language: Learning, Teaching and Assessment (Council of Europe, 2014).

The textbooks used to teach English at this university are the EMPOWER Series (Cambridge, 2015). The students receive EMPOWER A1 in the first semester, EMPOWER A2 in the second semester and then they begin EMPOWER B1 (pre-intermediate level) in the third semester - just when they begin to receive the subject of Educational Models in English.

The English II evaluation results (second semester) obtained after the students had supposedly reached

the A2 level, at the end of the first semester of the course 2015–2016, were not satisfactory. Accordingly, the board of directors of the university decided that the Educational Models subject, which was supposed to be taught in Spanish, would be taught in English by the teachers of this language in the third semester of the students training. At this point in their instruction, students have only been briefly introduced to the B1 level in the foreign language. The idea was to reinforce the learning process of English, while the students faced a subject matter in this language. However, this constituted a challenge for both teachers of English and students who do not have enough communicative competence in English to face this learning process.

This problematic situation led the coordinator of the subject Educational Models subject and author of this paper, together with two other colleagues, to introduce the Flipped Classroom or Flipped Learning and Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) as possible methodologies to face this challenge.

Marsh (2012) notes that every kind of language learning in which a target language is used for teaching students non-linguistic content can be called CLIL. Therefore, CLIL is an umbrella term for all such dual-process educational contexts (Coyle, 2007). According to Crouch and Mazur (2001) and Deslauriers, Schelew, and Wieman (2011), flipping the classroom or 'inverted teaching' emphasizes the idea that class time can be used to engage students in learning through active learning techniques, rather than through delivering lectures alone. Flipping the classroom is the process of replacing traditional lectures with more centered

learning strategies, such as active learning, discussions, problem based learning and other forms of group work and peer instruction. Content delivery is moved outside of the classroom, for example through videos, or pre-class readings.

In order to be consistent with the university pedagogical model related to the flipped classroom stated above, this paper centers on flipped learning as one of the main methodologies used to teach the subject of Educational Models in English. The research question posed in this study was: how can the flipped classroom be applied to the teaching-learning process of the subject Educational Models in English at UNAE? The overall aim of the research was to propose a methodology based on use of the flipped classroom to teach this subject in English to the third semester students at the UNAE in Ecuador.

What is the flipped classroom?

The flipped classroom is a pedagogical model in which the typical lecture and homework elements of a course are reversed. Short video lectures are viewed by students at home before the class session, while in-class time is devoted to exercises, projects, or discussions. The video lecture is often seen as the key ingredient in the flipped approach, such lectures being either created by the instructor and posted online or selected from an online repository. While a pre-recorded lecture could be a podcast or other audio format, the ease with which video can be accessed and viewed today has made it so ubiquitous that the flipped model has come to be identified with it. (EDUCAUSE, 2012).

The notion of a flipped classroom draws on such concepts as active learning, student engagement, hybrid course design, and course podcasting. The value of a flipped class is in the repurposing of class time into a workshop where students can inquire about lecture content, test their skills in applying knowledge, and interact with one another in hands-on activities. During class sessions, instructors function as coaches or advisors, encouraging students in individual inquiry and collaborative effort. 'Flipping the classroom' has become something of a buzzword in the last several years, driven in part by high profile publications in *The New York Times* (Fitzpatrick, 2012), *The Chronicle of Higher Education* (Berrett, 2012) and *Science* (Mazur, 2009).

In essence, 'flipping the classroom' means that students gain first exposure to new material outside of class, usually via reading or lecture videos, They then use class time to complete the more difficult work of assimilating that knowledge, perhaps through problem-solving, discussion, or debates.

As stated by Anderson and Krathwohl (2001), Bloom's revised taxonomy means that students are doing the lower levels of cognitive work (gaining

knowledge and comprehension) outside of class, and focusing on the higher forms of cognitive work (application, analysis, synthesis, and/or evaluation) in class, where they have the support of their peers and instructor. This model contrasts from the traditional model in which 'first exposure' occurs via lecture in class, with students assimilating knowledge through homework; thus the term 'flipped classroom.'

The flipped classroom constitutes a role change for instructors, who give up their front-of-the-class position in favor of a more collaborative and cooperative contribution to the teaching process of English. There is a concomitant change in the role of students, many of whom are used to being cast as passive participants in the education process, where instruction is served to them. The flipped model puts more of the responsibility for learning on the shoulders of students while giving them greater impetus to experiment. Activities can be student-led, and communication among students can become the determining dynamic of a session devoted to learning through hands-on work. What the flip does particularly well is to bring about a distinctive shift in priorities— from merely covering material to working toward mastery of it.

Methodology

In order to face the challenge of teaching the Educational Models subject in English to students who have only been briefly introduced to the B1 level in the foreign language, a specific flipped classroom methodology was developed. The details of this methodology are shown in the [Appendix](#). Based on this flipped classroom model, the process starts with the students viewing the video prior to class as many times as they need and then engaging in active communicative interactions in class. This approach is different from the traditional model in which 'first exposure' occurs via lecture in class, with students assimilating knowledge through homework. With this model, students develop the lower order thinking skills such as: remembering, understanding and applying while they view the video prior to class and then, in class, they develop the higher order thinking skills: analysing, evaluating and creating when they engage in collaborative projects, group and individual problem solving and peer based learning activities.

Conclusion

The methodology, based on the use of the flipped classroom to teach the subject of Educational Models in English to third semester students from the Education National University of Ecuador, proved to be successful. The flipped learning methodology helped students who were just introduced to the B1 level to learn the contents of a complex theoretical subject

such as Educational Models at the same time they increased their levels of communicative competence in the foreign language.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.

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Appendix: Flipped Classroom Methodology

Steps to follow while you flip your classroom

F- Figure out which topic you want to flip

L- Locate content-based resources to make available to students outside of class

I - Include an incentive for the students to complete such as a quiz or a writing assignment

P- Provide in-class activities for students to apply the content they learned outside of class

The four pillars of the FLIP

F - Flexible environment

L - Learning culture

I - Intentional content

P- Professional educator

Some stages for designing a flipped class

1. Reimagine your class in terms of learning flow.
2. Reimagine your class in terms of space and time.
3. Ensure the students prepare for the class by interacting with the material before class meetings.
4. Carefully conceive in-class interaction activities.

Setting up the flip

- Share your expectations with the students:
 - Preparing for the class: homework (readings, writing assignments or other assigned activities must be completed prior to the class)
 - It is the student's obligation to actively anticipate in all classes. His/her participation should indicate that he/she has completed the pre-class activities (and not necessarily that he/she has understood it all).
- CONVINCED students that this methodology is appropriate. Give explicit goals to help guide their learning
- Train your students for success in this new learning model:
 - Learning occurs best when people share and describe their understanding, express new ideas and make new connections between ideas, negotiate meaning and content misunderstandings.
- Do it gradually. Flip one class, pausing the video/text and explaining what you as a teacher are looking for.
- How can I be 'the guide on the side'?
 - Listen to students in class. Let them make mistakes, ask questions, engage in the topic through their personal experiences.
 - Interact with them individually during class time. Give feedback, process and reprocess information, correct and talk about the misunderstandings, think, share, practice.
 - Do not expect mastery in each class. Design pre-class activities so that you can verify that they completed the assignment but do not expect 100% understanding. If you can get 30%, you are doing great.

Rethinking your class in terms of space and time

- What will my classroom look like?
- How much time will I need for activities?
- What will I do with the extra time in class?
 - Decide what homework should be done in class
 - Choose communicative tasks that integrate the skills.
 - Decide which parts of the textbook could be used in the class for the students to engage and interact with.
 - Think about the following questions (use backwards design): What are my learning objectives? Who will produce the content? What content would best help the students grasp the new concept? Should I use technology? What do my students need to demonstrate? Use the answer to design in-class activities

Ensuring the students prepare for the class by interacting with the material before class meetings

- REQUIRE preparation (content interaction) prior to class meetings
 - Pre-reading or reading of texts
 - Watching videos
 - Listening to podcasts

- Online discussion groups on your LMS (e.g., Moodle, Blackboard, Edmodo) or social media site (e.g., Facebook, chat, Twitter, etc)

Building in learner accountability

- Discussion of the topic is not meant to be a summary. Comments should be thoughtful and show that the students have interacted with the material, but not necessarily that they have understood it completely. Look at their access to the material, not at their language use.
- Students should be required to comment on the responses and questions of their peers. The teacher can give points to the students for these comments, and require a minimum to create a dynamic discussion
- Questions that are raised can and should be used in the next class session.
- Be sure to provide students with a calendar of dates each assignment (outside of class) is done.
- Establish parameters Examples: length, depth, grading, timelines

- Trust in your students and the knowledge they can bring to your lesson

Carefully conceive in-class interactive activities: classifying and ranking tasks, calculations, justifications, critiques, jigsaw activities, story creation, games, discussions, role plays and skits/simulations and re-enactments, problem solving task based activities, illustrations/ design and analysis

The three flips in a nutshell

Flipped classroom I- Before the lesson (out of class)

Students prepare to participate in the activity. The teacher records lecture and the students tune in and watch videos any time before they come to class.

Flipped classroom II- During the lesson (in class)

Students arrive to class ready to engage and participate applying key concepts with feedback in active learning activities.

Flipped classroom III- After the lesson (out of class)

Students check their understanding and extend their learning