Benefits of flipping ESP classes.

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Abstract

Recent advances in technology have transformed the way people live providing great facilities as well as giving an opportunity to an individual approach. Education, which is also profoundly influenced by modern technology, is not the exception. The innovative teaching model, Flipped Learning, which inverts classroom framework to more active learning, is gaining popularity in teaching different subjects at universities. This article discusses the benefits of Flipped Classes in teaching Technical English in university, which is called ESP (English for Specific Purposes) in philology. As ESP differs from learning English taking more time to enhance vocabulary, specific aspects, and contextual approach to the topic, with which students are able to deal individually as homework by visually watching the videos prepared by a teacher. The model assists learners to acquire topics dealing with their different learning styles, perceptions, and biological prime time. Some of the great results of flipping classes are being empowered, interacted, and given feedback individually by an instructor, which is important in learning ESP. Furthermore, Flipped Learning is a good way to develop independent study skills of learners that is considered to be a lifelong skill.

Keywords: ESP, Flipped Learning, inverting classroom, innovative teaching model, learning styles.

1. INTRODUCTION

Technical English is taught for a year in Turin Polytechnic University to the students who have IELTS certificate band 5 or more. Although they have Pre-Intermediate level of English, still they have some challenges to cope with the ESP. Instructors are always asked several questions on the technical English that take much time to be into the topic for students.

During the period of teaching technical English in Turin Polytechnic University in Tashkent, there are some problems which slow down the process of learning Technical English. The first obstacle is new specific vocabulary that constitutes the whole learning process with texts for reading, listening, writing and speaking. It usually takes much time to comprehend the topic vocabulary. The next problem is technical topics which learners without any professional experience could have some difficulties to understand. Thus, obviously, students can ask some questions to clarify the issue. What is more, the most crucial point for teachers is that a teacher has to repeat to conduct the same topic several times in different

groups. It makes the teaching procedure routine which could have negative consequences for the teacher such as being fed up with his job, and for students such as boring classes that could be one of the causes to miss classes apart from their poor grade results. Furthermore, as time for checking homework in class takes much time, and every student is needed a personal approach, there is no usually enough time to explain a new topic in one class. These problems have been worked out by looking for some ways to solve them for many years considering different methods of teaching languages. After applying different ways of teaching Technical English effectively, the choice was done on Flipped Learning, which is particularly suitable for the students in polytechnic directions.

2. DATA ANALYSES

There are 6 benefits for learners inside the Flipped Classroom Method. In fact, the whole method was designed with the learner in mind: to provide a more flexible and reachable environment that fuels learning for everyone.

1. Give students the time to reflect on material learned.

Students usually complete at least 30% of their learning online with the flipped classroom away from the face-to-face classroom. They have a chance to reflect on the material and work on their analysis without the pressure of a traditional classes. This allows students to better retain information because it empowers them to think critically and truly absorb the information. In this way it becomes easier for teachers to identify what the student is struggling with and provide them with adequate practice materials.

As Bergmann and Sams [1] stated, a flipped classroom can be described as a setting where that "which is traditionally done in class is now done at home, and that which is traditionally done as homework is now completed in class". In other words, the sequence is inverted. According to Lage, Platt, and Treglialace [2], "Inverting the classroom means that events that have traditionally taken inside the classroom now take place outside the classroom and vice versa".

However, this definition is weak for my situation. ESP classes is mainly perceived when students learn the content by having face-to-face activities apart from watching recorded videos. The flipped classroom is mainly perceived as students receiving video lectures for instruction, but that is only the tip of the success. A successfully flipped classroom involves more than just recording didactic content and sending it to students before a lesson: the time spent in class should be more important than the videos. This the second benefit of the Flipped Class Methods.

2.   Students have more productive interactions with their instructors.

The flipped classroom model ensures that class time is not wasted on explaining materials that students already know, nor on providing translations or complicated grammar definitions. It is not even wasted on trying to coordinate between different students with different skillsets. Instead, it guarantees that students and teachers are prepared for their face-to-face lessons and providing wit a more productive interaction. In this model, classroom time can be used for engaging in activities, discussing concepts, clarifying hard-to-understand information, and investigating questions related to content. The videos allow time in class for problem solving and hands-on activities, converting the classroom into a place where active learning occurs. The traditional classrooms are mostly teacher centered which is in conflict with the constructivist approaches to learning and teaching. [3]

3.   Allows students to learn at their own pace.

A big challenge for language learning classes is the variations of skill levels among students. Even at the same CEFR levels can vary in skill and knowledge: someone could be a high level of B2 and another can be at a low B2 level. The flipped classroom is a way to leverage the differences in their skillsets and provide an adequate learning environment. Students learn comfortably at their own pace from the comfort of their own physical environment before entering a classroom with other students. This engages their learning retention and promotes classroom interaction.

There have been outlined a range of benefits for students, including increased time (and support) for completing what were traditionally seen as "homework tasks", differentiated teaching for students' range of abilities, allowing the "pausing and rewinding" of teachers in recorded presentations, increased student-teacher interaction, informed parents, a more transparent classroom, greater student motivation and interest, and improved classroom management. [1]

4.   Enable instructors to help students who are struggling the most.

Language courses are seldom easy or effortless, students have to really work at retaining the information, even in flipped classroom. The difference is that in a flipped classroom model, teachers can provide students with individualized help for struggling students because they can focus class time on reviewing and explaining areas of weakness. Not every exercise is easy for every single student, but not every exercise is as hard either. Sometimes a teacher will find students all agree.

The flipped classroom is pedagogically sound because it serves the principles of personalized-differentiated learning, student-centered instruction, and constructivism. It is personalized because each student learns at his or her own pace. It is student-centered because class time can be used to participate in engaging activities, while the role of the teacher changes to facilitator and observer, allowing students to be more active. It applies the constructivist approach in which students take responsibility for their own learning; class time is free from didactic lecturing, allowing for a variety of activities, group work, and interactive discussion. In other words, students have a great variety of hands on activities, promoting more meaningful learning. [4]

5.   Empower every student to participate and be visible.

Anyone who has ever been a language teacher knows the never ending struggle to get students to engage and interact. Lack of confidence and comfortability with the language often stops learners from speaking out or joining in on class discussions. All students learn at a different paces and levels and some find it difficult to learn in one class sitting; they require a bit more critical thinking and reflection time in order to provide their opinions of the material. As a result, they fail to interact in the class being afraid they might not have understood the material well. The flipped classroom model totally flips this problem. The flipped classroom makes sure students are able to comfortably examine course materials before coming to class, allowing them to feel more confident in putting themselves out there and interacting with their classmates during face-to-face lessons.

A flipped classroom frees up class time for teachers and presents learning choices to students rather than just informing them in a sit-and-listen format. With this model, teachers "… can deliver this instruction by recording and narrating screencasts of work they do on their computers, creating videos of themselves teaching, or curating video lessons from trusted Internet sites". [5] In other words, teachers can record videos, add interactive elements, and share previously recorded segments from other teachers. Students should watch these videos before coming the classroom so that they can be active in the classroom activities. With Internet access becoming more general sources of language teachers to reach more videos for using in their language teaching classes have been on the increase.

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more transparent classroom, greater student motivation and interest, and improved classroom management [1]. Moreover, the sixth benefit of the Flipped Classroom Method:

6. Enable instructors to provide feedback anytime from anywhere.

As any language learner knows, teacher`s feedback is vital for a successful development of any language. Constructive feedback allows students to know if they are on the right track or if they need reinforcement. The flipped classroom enables teachers to provide feedback to their students via online at any time and from anywhere. Students are never out of the loop when it comes to their language progress.

7. Moreover, flipped classroom approach could be suitable for any type of learners with different learning styles. A student with a visual learning style might find recorded videos useful as they tend to store memories in picture form. Most of information (texts, graphics) in today`s DL environment is visual. DL tends to be in a format that is easy for visual learners. Recorded videos are easy to handle with by auditory learners as well by memorising information listening to them, than by looking at them in books. Generally, auditory learners may get more from a class that uses videoconferencing or from an online course that adds substantial sound files like in recorded videos. However, learning through recorded videos can be challenging for kinaesthetic learners, as they best remember things they learn through physical activities, which they can do in the classroom after watching videos. Thus, flipping the class is beneficial for all types of learners whom I have in every of my class of the English language in the university.

3. CONCLUSION

Technical English in Turin Polytechnic University is taught for two semesters for freshmen. The expected outcome is implying Technical English in internships during academic years, and further in students` workplaces. So, enhancing this ability is vital; however, it is challenging in such a short period of time. That is why, there was a great desire to do something to improve the situation. Flipped learning was a solution to this problem. Taking into account above mentioned benefits, I can acknowledge that flipped classroom approach may be one way to address the teaching ESP. The students appeared to find the recorded material helpful, although it was not investigated whether they perceived or experienced the kind of in-class interactions that proponents of flipped classroom advocate. It is a way to change teacher-centred class - where he spent the majority of class time explaining every single technical terminology – to one where classroom time was more targeted and often focused on more practice. Due

to the amount of content that needs to be covered in the course, the associated time constraints, and externally assessment measures, it seems that flipped classroom can provide additional support to students. In spite of the short period for learning technical English, with the aforementioned benefits students can handle with classroom tasks easily and investigate further more complete implementations of the flipped classroom. It will be more important to see if it might result in a shift to more interactive in-class discussions instead of an almost exclusive practising for fluency that may be a hallmark of this course.

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