



Flipped Classroom in the Language Education Context: a Case Study

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Abstract

Over the past few years, Sweden has become a highly connected country in terms of accessibility to high-speed broadband connections and wifi solutions. Local municipalities advocate the use of ICT in schools from very early years and schools adopt 1:1 solutions, with a tendency for iPads to be used in the early years and computers in later years. As a specific approach, Flipped Classroom techniques have been used for some years now in Swedish schools, but mainly in the natural sciences subjects. In contrast, there has been less innovation in the area of language teaching, learning and language teacher education.

This presentation addresses some of the issues concerned with implementing Flipped Classroom techniques in language teacher education, targeting an optional course in English for teachers of young learners (school years 1–6). It reports on preliminary results of a study of students' perceptions of working with the techniques as well as their results on one of the exams of the course. The course module in question focuses on English grammar and is normally taught as a series of seminars where central aspects of English grammar are presented and practiced. The learning outcomes are examined through a written test on English grammar.

Adopting the Flipped Classroom technique implied that the students listened to nine recorded lectures, one before each seminar, and dealing with the topic area to be discussed at the seminar. In addition, the students were also asked to complete a number of pre-seminar tasks and take an online quiz. The task responses and quiz results were analysed by the teacher before the seminar, providing formative input to the structure of the seminar. Typically the face-to-face seminar dealt with problem-solving activities, discussions of particularly intricate grammatical issues, and it ended with the students' formulating rules or principles of the grammatical aspects being discussed in groups of three or four. These texts were to be sent in to the teacher forming the basis of a "post-seminar lecture" where the teacher highlighted successful responses and was also able to point out inadequacies where necessary.

Final examination scores indicated a high degree of achievement among the students, with 47 out of 50 students receiving a passing grade on the grammar exam. Analyses of a questionnaire distributed to the students after completion of the course indicated that students experience a heightened level of awareness of grammatical rules, perceptions of "firmer" knowledge of English grammar, and, not unimportantly, reduced anxiety levels regarding teaching English to young learners. The results suggest that implementing Flipped Classroom techniques has positive pedagogical effects on a structured course of English grammar for language teacher students.