



# **That's not it! Exploring practitioners' understandings of Flipped Learning in an online preessional course.**

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# Outline

- The Research Project
- What is Flipped Learning?
  - Insights from the literature
- Enacting Flipped Learning
  - The Context
  - What is Flipped Learning for...
    - ...Course designers?
    - ...Team Leaders?
    - ...Teachers?
- So, what is Flipped Learning? Implications for Practice



# The Research Project

- Data collected in the Summer of 2020
  - Mixed Methods Research (questionnaires & **semi-structured interviews**)
    - RQs exploring students', **teachers'** and **managers'** perceptions of FL in the OL EAP pre-sessional course



Practitioner – Researcher  
Insider researcher

# What is FL for you?

- What do you understand by FL?
- What informs your understanding of FL?





# Flipped Learning in the Literature

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 subject matter (Flipped Learning Network, 2014, p. 1)

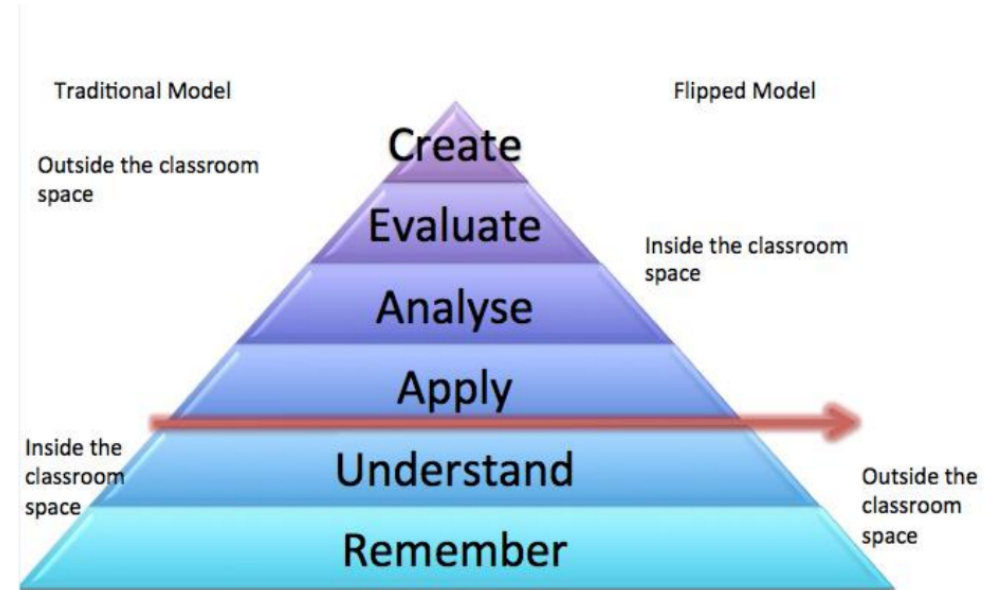


Figure 1. Bloom's Taxonomy in the Traditional and Flipped Classroom (Based on Anderson et al., 2001).

Flipping the classroom is simply turning Bloom's Taxonomy upside down, moving the higher-order thinking skills tasks into the classroom (Brinks-Lockwood, 2014, p. 2)

# Enacting Flipped Learning – Research Context

- EAP Preessional course, Russell Group University in the UK
  - 10-weeks and 6-weeks preessional courses
- FL had been adopted in 2018, making 2020 the third year this approach was implemented.



# Enacting Flipped Learning – Research Context

- The preessional courses are designed by the department.
  - Quality of materials consistently praised
- Course Directors (x**1 participant**)
  - Team leaders (x **2 participants**)
  - Teachers (x **8 participants**)
    - Permanent members of staff (x3 participants) and temporary members of staff (x5 participants)
    - TEFL-Q



# What is Flipped Learning? – Course Director

- FL was adopted as a response to circumstances but perceived to bring key benefits to the EAP classroom
  - Autonomy
  - Learner-centred lessons
- Coursed design based Brinks-Lockwood's (2014) understanding of FL but also
  - Task-Based Learning
  - Andragogy
- Flipped content informs the sessions and the assessments, sometimes flipped content is picked up in the assessment (e.g. writing tasks) but not explicitly in the sessions.
- Nature of FL was explicitly addressed with teachers in 2018 and 2019 but not in 2020 as OL training took priority

**We did in 2018, and 2019, we provided sessions about flipped learning for teachers, and we even flipped it when we gave a reading on flipped learning to teachers to read in advance, and then we had a live session. Now, in 2020, I think that was something that was sacrificed. (Lester, course director)**





# What is Flipped Learning? – Team Leaders

- Perceived focused on practicalities, not on pedagogical principles.
- Unclear understanding of FL
  - Why is it used?
  - How is it used?

I'd say the teachers I work with overwhelmingly just **focused on the practicalities** of where we go, how do we start? What do the students need to do?  
(Dennis, Team Leader)

When I was a teacher, last summer the summer before, I just thought, okay, we just want to make more money {laugh}  
(William, team leader)





# What is Flipped Learning? – EAP tutors

They're almost coming into the live sessions and they're almost recycling, what they've done at home, but it's certainly at the beginning at the initial stages. So yes, I think **that the link is very clear to them**, then (Cedric, first time teaching in the course).

Oh, I think the best thing is definitely the students' preparation the, you know, a lot of their questions are already answered (...) once in a while, you might get a tricky grammar question. And then they need to be clarified (...) those types of questions crop up, then less frequently, which is helpful when you teach an **online course** (Naomi, *returner*).

# What is Flipped Learning? – EAP tutors

Ah, well flipped now flipped learning was what we did last year. So flipped learning to me is entirely separate to this **online experience** (Clarence, *returner*).

And, and I remember a colleague telling me about it (...) her idea of flipped learning was where the student comes to the front, you give the students a task, and they come to the front, and they teach the rest of the class (Jen, first time teaching in the course).

# What is Flipped Learning? – EAP tutors

- Practitioners systematically demonstrated different conceptualisations of FL
  - This is true for practitioners that taught a FL preessional in 2018 and 2019 when FL was specifically addressed at a theoretical level during induction.
- Different understandings of FL can co-exist under the premise that FL is turning Bloom's Taxonomy upside-down.
- Lester's vision of flipped content informing sessions and assignments was not homogenously filtered down.

# What is Flipped Learning? – Implications for Practice

- FL definitions vary in the literature...and in practice!
  - Talking about the FL in specific terms may foster better understanding among practitioners
- A top-down approach has the advantages of
  - Consistency
  - Quality of materials
- And the dangers of...
  - Pedagogical underpinnings becoming invisible

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# Any Questions?

Thank you so much!

