

Linköping Universitet | Department of Culture & Communication
Linköpings universitet | Institutionen för kultur och kommunikation
Thesis 1, 15 credits | Secondary School Teachers' Programme (upper secondary) - English
Konsumtionsuppsats, 15 hp | Ämneslärarprogrammet (gymnasieskolan) - Engelska
Spring Term 2016 | ISRN: LIU-GY-L-G—16/003--SE
Vårterminen 2016 | ISRN: LIU-GY-L-G—16/003--SE

The Effects of 'Flipping' a Classroom with the Focus on Teaching English as a Second Language

*Effekterna av att "flippa" ett klassrum med fokus på att
lära ut engelska som andraspråk*

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Ämne <i>Subject</i> Engelska <i>English</i>	Språk <i>Language</i> Engelska <i>English</i>	Rapporttyp <i>Type of Report</i> Examensarbete 1 (konsumtion) <i>Thesis 1</i>	ISRN-nummer <i>ISRN number</i> LIU-GY-L-G--16/003 -- SE
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Title <i>The Effects of 'Flipping' a Classroom with the Focus on Teaching English as a Second Language</i>
Titel <i>Effekterna av att "flippa" ett klassrum med fokus på att lära ut engelska som andraspråk</i>
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Sammanfattning <i>Summary</i> <p>This literature review analyses what advantages and disadvantages can be gained by utilizing the flipped classroom method. The Swedish curriculum has been taken into consideration when conducting this review in order to see whether the method is compatible with the aim of the subject of English in the Swedish upper secondary school. Two key principles behind the flipped classroom are 'active learning' and 'student-centered learning'. These key principles have been discussed and contrasted with the terms: 'passive learning' and 'teacher-centered learning'. Acknowledging the fact that it is a challenge to engage students in their own learning as well as have them realize the benefits of doing so, this paper also highlights the advantages of implementing technology tools in the classroom where one can meet the needs of the students of today.</p> <p>The results of this literature review show that there are many advantages when utilizing the flipped classroom method. For example, the flipped classroom creates well-suited environments where discussions can take place, as the in-class activities aim at all students being engaged, applying concepts and sharing ideas. However, the results also show some disadvantages that may come when converting to a flipped classroom. Some of these are that the flipped model takes adjustment time, students need to adapt to the transition to a flipped classroom, and preparing online lessons is time consuming. Furthermore, both students and teachers need to learn how to use the new technology that comes with the flipped classroom model.</p>
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Nyckelord <i>Keywords</i> Flipped Classroom, English as a second language, English as a foreign language, student-centered learning, active learning
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Glossary

CALL	Computer Assisted Language Learning
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
ESL	English as a Second Language
ELT	English Language Teaching
FLRS	Flipped Classroom Readiness Scale
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
MLA	Modern Language Association
OLRS	Online Learning Readiness Scale
SL	Second Language
SLA	Second Language Acquisition
SRL	Self-Regulated Learning
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math
TESOL	Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages

1. Introduction

The authors of this literature review are both studying to become English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers in Sweden. Throughout the years in the teachers' programme, we have constantly struggled with how to successfully organize and carry out lessons to get students involved and at the same time cover the aims stated in the Swedish curriculum for the subject English. We are expected to create opportunities for students to develop their communicative skills, which include receptive as well production, and interactive skills (Skolverket 2011: 53). In addition to this, the curriculum states that the subject English should aim to help students develop their English skills in order for them to be able, want, and dare to use the language in different situations (Skolverket 2011: 53). Moreover, it is not an easy task to get students engaged in their own learning and have them find the benefits of doing so. Acknowledging the fact that most of the students we will be teaching are used to constantly being exposed to technology, we came across a method called the 'flipped classroom'. We wanted to find out more about the method and whether it could facilitate the different aspects that are to be covered within the subject of English in upper secondary school as well as meet the needs of today's students. In addition, we wanted to be able to critically discuss the method. Therefore, we have also taken possible disadvantages into consideration while carrying out this literature review.

1.1 Aims and Research Questions

The overarching aim of our thesis is to analyze what advantages can be gained through utilizing the flipped classroom method, as well as review what disadvantages the method might have. Furthermore, we want to investigate how the flipped classroom method can be used in an ESL classroom and whether this method can be of relevance for students as well as teachers of today. Based on these aims we have formulated the following research questions:

- *What advantages and disadvantages does the flipped classroom have?*
- *How can the method be used in the English as a second language classroom?*

2. Background

In this chapter the rationale of the flipped classroom will be given. We will also present the historical background of the origin and development of the method. Furthermore, we will explain the rationale behind the language classroom of today and the key components behind the communicative classroom. Finally, the Swedish Curriculum for upper secondary school for the subject of English will be presented.

2.1. The Rationale of the Flipped Classroom

The flipped classroom is a concept where the workload shifts from in-class to homework and vice versa. That is, the activities traditionally done during class are done at home instead. Accordingly, the activities traditionally done as homework are done together with peers and the teacher as an in-class activity (Bergmann & Sams 2012: 13). The rationale behind this concept is that the instructions move from a group learning space to an individual learning space. The effects in the in-class activities create an interactive and dynamic learning environment where all students can deepen their engagement as well as apply concepts with help from a teacher (Flipped Learning n.d.). Two of the key principles behind the flipped classroom are ‘active learning’ and ‘student-centered learning’. These principles will be presented together with the contrasting terms: ‘passive learning’ and ‘teacher-centered learning’. In addition, we will give a short explanation of what the traditional classroom stands for in this thesis.

2.1.1. Passive and Active Learning

Crystal Kirch (2014: 44-45), a high school teacher in Math, describes her students as passive learners who did not take any responsibility for their own learning. She had created an environment where her students had become spoon-fed learners who passively sat at their desks without questioning or reflecting on the lessons’ content. The principles supporting the flipped classroom approach are grounded in theoretical understandings of active learning (Bonnell & Eison 1991 in Hung 2015: 82). Active learning is defined as an umbrella term which involves students in doing activities and at the same time thinking about the activity they are doing (Hung 2015: 82). The method encourages students to engage in their classroom activities by critically thinking about complex concepts, reflect on their learning, and explore ideas outside of what is taught during lessons, etc. Furthermore, it is suggested that active learning can help students develop self-awareness, thinking skills, and collaborative skills (McLaughlin et al. 2016: 30).

2.1.2. Teacher-Centered and Student-Centered Learning

Teacher-centered and student-centered learning are two distinct approaches that can be used in a classroom. Usually, teacher-centered learning refers to a classroom where the teacher has control over what material students study and in which way, where, how, and at what pace students learn the material. In addition, the teacher tends to be the most active person and do most of the talking in the classroom while students spend most time listening and taking notes at their desks (The Glossary of Educational Reform n.d.). In contrast, student-centered learning usually refers to a wide variety of educational programs and strategies that are intended to focus on every student's individual learning needs, interests, aspirations, as well as taking their sociocultural background into consideration (The Glossary of Educational Reform n.d.). The flipped classroom is a student-centered learning environment where teachers can maximize the time spent in the classroom by guiding students how to solve problems, provide them with differentiated instructions, as well as create an environment where social interaction can occur (Hao 2016: 296).

2.1.3. Traditional Classroom

Unruh et al. (2016: 40) argue that one needs to look closer at the concept of a 'traditional classroom' in order to understand the components of a flipped classroom. The traditional model is described as a classroom where all students' desks are aligned in rows pointing toward the teacher's desk and where students are taking notes or working independently on an activity. Furthermore, students are expected to absorb the content of the lesson and then practice it independently as homework after the lesson has ended. However, it is possible to change the classroom seating arrangement, for example to incorporate group work (Unruh et al. 2016: 40). Nevertheless, the basics of a traditional classroom are always the same. The teacher provides students with information from various disciplines without giving them any context to the information they are taught (Rakes et al. 2006 in Unruh et al. 2016: 40).

In Bergmann and Sams' anthology *Flipped Learning - Gateway to Student Engagement* (2014), one chapter is dedicated to how a student-centered classroom leads to deeper learning. Kirch (2014: 44-45) writes about how she used to teach according to her view of a traditional classroom. She refers to the model of a traditional classroom as a teacher-focused and a teacher-driven class in the sense that what she as a teacher thought students needed, what she thought was interesting and what questions she thought students had without really allowing time for students to engage in their own learning (Kirch 2014: 42). One of Kirch's 11th-grade Math students defines the traditional and the flipped classroom in the following way:

In a traditional classroom, students spend the precious time they have with the teacher listening, as opposed to interacting. The flipped classroom flips the focus of the teacher to the students. I believe it offers students more time to really practice, learn new concepts, and later on master them. I've gotten much more individual attention with the flipped classroom. [...] I've learned to manage my time more efficiently. (Kirch 2014: 47).

The traditional model is still used today by a wide variety of teachers (Unruh et al. 2016: 42) and throughout this paper the term 'traditional classroom' will be used in order to refer to a teacher-centered classroom with passive-learners.

2.2. Historical Background

The pedagogical methods behind the flipped classroom have been used for over half a century; however, the terminology is new. During the 60's and 70's, teachers began working towards pedagogies for collaborative learning in a student-centered context. The method was known as 'preparatory' work for class (Marks 2015: 242). In 2006, two chemistry teachers, Aaron Sams and Jonathan B Bergmann, noticed that they shared similar philosophies of education. They collaboratively planned their lessons by taking turns writing tests and planning labs. One day they came across a technology magazine introducing a software program that would allow them to include voice recordings to PowerPoint slides and make them available for their students online. Sams and Bergmann saw the software as a solution to reach students who could not attend their lessons and therefore struggled to keep up. Furthermore, this software would also decrease Sams and Bergmann's workload by them not having to reteach lessons (Bergmann & Sams 2012: 3).

By spring 2007, they recorded all their lessons and posted them online. It had such positive effect that even students attending the live lessons would rewatch them online and others would watch them when studying for exams. What they did not expect, however, was the enormous gratitude they received from students and teachers all over the world who had watched their online lectures. The two chemistry teachers were amazed by the great impact their teaching had outside their classroom (Bergmann & Sams 2012: 3-4).

The next step towards the flipped classroom came through a realization by Sams: "The time when students really need me physically present is when they get stuck and need my individual help. They don't need me there in the room with them to yak at them and give them content; they can receive content on their own" (Bergmann & Sams 2012: 3-4). This insight led to the idea of

prerecording all their lectures and having students watch them as ‘homework’ and use the whole class period explaining concepts that students did not understand. Thus the flipped classroom method was born (Bergmann & Sams 2012: 5).

Many teachers today see the benefits of using the flipped classroom model and have established it in their teaching. The 21st century’s ‘Net generation learners’ see this student-centered model as a natural element in their education. Bergmann and Sams were pioneers in the field of using screencasting in education and today the flipped classroom model is used in a variety of classrooms (Marks 2015: 242).

2.3. The Rationale of the Language Classroom

The focus of English language teaching (ELT) has shifted from a narrow view of language by looking at it mainly as a formal system (Hedge 2000: 45). Instead, during the 1970s Hymes, a sociolinguist came to the conclusion that one needed social and cultural knowledge to fully comprehend as well as use linguistic forms. These notions lead to the insight that the knowledge of a language alone is not enough: one needs to be able to apply that knowledge to communication as well (Hedge 2000: 45). As a result, a language theorist called Bachman developed the concept of *communicative language ability* during the 1990s (Hedge 2000: 46). Since then, a well-established goal of ELT has been to provide students with the ability to communicate effectively in English (Hedge 2000: 44). Several researchers have identified five key components in order to develop communicative language ability: linguistic competence, pragmatic competence, discourse competence, strategic competence, and fluency (Hedge 2000: 46).

Linguistic competence involves a knowledge of form and meaning, that is, spelling, pronunciation, vocabulary, word formation, grammatical and sentence structure, and linguistic semantics (Hedge 2000: 46-47). Pragmatic competence is the ability to use appropriate language according to the social context in which it is produced, that is, to accommodate the language depending on situation and who one is communicating with (Hedge 2000: 48-49). Discourse competence refers to the ability to maintain a conversation and to develop a topic. This means that second language (SL) learners will have to acquire different language strategies such as, initiating, entering, interrupting, checking and confirming during a conversation. Strategic competence aims to develop different communicative strategies (Hedge 2000: 53). For example, when one does not know a specific lexeme in English, one is still able to get the message across due to the ability to explain the lexeme

using other words. The final key component is fluency, which is the ability to easily link units of speech together without hesitation (Hedge 2000: 54).

In order to achieve a successful communicative classroom one needs to create activities which lead to 'natural language use' (Brumfit 1985 in Hedge 2000: 57). To achieve this outcome, focus should be on meaning and not form. It is the learner who has to formulate and produce his or her own ideas and opinions as well as determine the content of the conversation. For example, students have to negotiate with each other and the aim is to have the student interpret and respond, without relying on the teacher to provide the language (Hedge 2000: 57). This is a distinct example of how the student could take the role of an active learner in a student-centered classroom.

2.4. The Swedish Curriculum for the Subject of English

Many parallels can be drawn between the five components of a communicative classroom and the Swedish Curriculum for the subject of English. It is clearly stated that the subject of English should aim to give students opportunities to develop their communicative skills, which include receptive as well as production and interactive skills (Skolverket 2011: 53), that is, the ability to be understood and comprehend both spoken and written English. In addition to this, the curriculum states that the subject English should aim to help students develop their English skills in order for them to be able to, want to, and dare to use the language in different situations. Students should be given opportunities to develop comprehensive communicative abilities, which they can use in functional and meaningful contexts (Skolverket 2011: 53). Moreover, students should be given the opportunities to develop the ability to use different strategies in order to support and solve their communicative problems when their linguistic knowledge is not enough (Skolverket 2011: 53).

3. Data and Method

In this chapter we will introduce the nature of our sources, the procedure for gathering them and finally the procedure for processing our sources. In addition, we will explain how we went about choosing our empirical studies, and on what basis we sorted them into different categories.

3.1. The Nature of our Sources

The sources that have been used for this literature review consist of empirical studies, academic theses, articles from scientific journals, and books. We have also used the Swedish curriculum for the subject of English in order to see if the flipped classroom method could be of relevance to our future teaching.

Some of the empirical studies that have been used are longitudinal comparative studies while others are short-term and self-evaluating studies from a student or a teacher perspective. For example, one of the articles discusses flipped learning readiness in foreign language classrooms and is based on the students' own self-evaluations (Hao 2015). However, since studies show that there is a lack of research regarding English as a foreign language (EFL) when it comes to the flipped classroom (Mehring 2016: 1), sources treating second language teaching and learning in general have therefore also been used. One example of this type of source is a journal article that discusses how a teacher of Spanish is using the flipped classroom when teaching Spanish as a SL (Muldrow 2013).

In addition to articles about SL learning, we have also chosen to look at sources treating other subjects beyond language. Choosing a broader spectrum of subjects was primarily due to the limited research that has been carried out regarding SL learning in a flipped classroom. Doing so led us to realize that other subjects using the flipped classroom method could be compatible with our research field in SL learning. One article discusses the effectiveness of the flipped classroom in comparison to a traditional classroom (Unruh et al. 2016). Another article is a case study report in higher education where teacher students taking a pedagogy course were a part of the study in order to see if the flipped classroom is a good tool to increase interaction between teacher, student, and peers (McLaughlin et al. 2016).

The sources mentioned above as well as the books we have chosen for this literature report are international, but mainly Asian. Therefore, in order to get a Swedish perspective in addition to the Swedish curriculum, we used one article from the Swedish National Agency for Education. The reason for wanting a Swedish perspective is that we will be teachers of ESL in Sweden.

3.2. Procedure for Gathering Sources

The procedure for gathering our empirical studies has mainly been through Unisearch, which is Linköping University's collective database. In addition to Unisearch we have searched through other databases such as ERIC, LIBRIS, LLBA, Google Scholar, Ulrichsweb, and DiVA. However, we reached the conclusion that some of the databases were not compatible to our specific field of investigation. They were therefore excluded due to limited access or not dealing with the correct field. That led us to narrow down our choice of databases to Unisearch, ERIC, LIBRIS, and Google Scholar. When using these databases, we only selected peer-reviewed articles in order to ensure that the chosen empirical studies were reliable.

When searching for relevant articles we went about it by typing in keywords such as: Flipped, flipped classroom or inverted classroom and came across articles that treated our field of investigation, which we found useful for the background chapter of this literature review. Moreover, by adding the following keywords: flipped classroom and second language acquisition, SLA¹, CALL², TESOL³, SL learners, and EFL⁴, articles with specific relevance for Second Language Learning or teaching were found. Through this step we were pleased with the amount of sources and could start selecting the ones dealing with second or foreign language acquisition as well as other relevant studies regarding teacher students, pedagogy, as well as peer and teacher relations.

In addition to our empirical studies we wanted to find didactic literature and theory, and therefore made use of the LIBRIS search engine. We typed in keywords such as: Flipped, flipped classroom, SLA, EFL, CALL, and ESL⁵. We read the book reviews and found out more about the contents, then we selected the books that were considered relevant for our field of investigation.

Nevertheless, we found that none of our collected sources for the literature review had a Swedish perspective. In order to get a Swedish perspective on our research field, we went to the Swedish National Agency for Education. We typed in similar keywords, but this time in Swedish, and found articles about our research field that we considered useful. We also used the Swedish curriculum for the upper secondary school and looked at the chapter regarding the subject of English.

¹ SLA stands for second language acquisition

² CALL stands for computer assisted language learning

³ TESOL stands for teaching English to speakers of other languages

⁴ EFL stands for English as a foreign language

⁵ ESL stands for English as a second language

3.3. Procedure for Processing Sources

We began by collecting our sources in a document and writing down short summaries in order to see which method or methods had been used. The next step was to list and sort the sources based on their methodology in order to set them apart in a distinct way. After sorting the articles based on their methodology we started analyzing the studies and discussing what would be a good way to divide them. We came to the conclusion that our empirical studies could be divided into two distinct categories aligned with our research question: studies with language as their subject area and studies with other subject areas than language. In addition to these main categories we also have a third sub-category that we call practical guides, which consists of non-empirical studies.

3.4. Difficulties

We had difficulties finding empirical studies that covered the flipped classroom in second language teaching and specifically ESL teaching. Limited research has been done regarding the flipped classroom in general due to the availability and accessibility of technology as a tool for learning being a relatively new phenomenon. Therefore, there are not many studies where we can see a long-term-effect of the method since all the empirical studies we could find were from the 21st century.

4. Research Review

In this chapter we will firstly present all empirical studies chosen for this literature review and analyze them based on their subject area. Furthermore, we will synthesize the empirical studies and compare the results from different literature. The final step of the research review consists of what we call ‘the practical guides’, which are our non-empirical studies that we have chosen to include in order to demonstrate the flipped classroom method.

4.1. Review of Empirical Studies

All seven empirical studies used for this literature review will be presented and discussed in this chapter. All studies chosen have been carried out during a period between 2010 until 2016. The studies have been divided into two main categories based on their approach. The first category consists of studies that have their subject area in ESL or SL learning. The second category consists of studies carried out in a non-language subject area, focusing mainly on the advantages and disadvantages with the flipped classroom method. The empirical studies within the subject area of ESL or SL learning category have been grouped together into subcategories based on the methods used to conduct these studies.

4.1.1. Empirical Studies with a Language-Learning Subject Area

Reading through our empirical studies we found that four of them had language as their subject area. Three of them have their focus on ESL or EFL learning (Engin 2014; Hung 2015; Kasapoglu-Akyol 2010) and one has its focus on SL learning in general (Hao 2015). All of these studies were conducted in a flipped classroom context but the methods varied. Three of the studies used self-evaluating questionnaires, while a mixed-method design was used when conducting the fourth study. We have therefore chosen to name the subcategories self-evaluating method and mixed-method.

4.1.1.1. Self-Evaluating Method

Engin (2014), Hao (2015) and Kasapoglu-Akyol (2010) all used self-evaluating questionnaires when conducting their studies within the field of the flipped classroom in ESL, EFL or SL teaching or learning. Engin (2014) analyzed the outcome of implementing student-created videos in an EFL classroom. The study was carried out at a university located in the United Arab Emirates where the participants consisted of eighteen female EFL learners who were 19-21 years old. These students choose a topic within the field of academic writing and then created a video tutorial for their peers (Engin 2014: 16). At the end of the project, the students answered a two-part questionnaire. The

first part was created to collect feedback solely on the flipped approach and the second part was created to collect feedback on how useful they found the method for their understanding and knowledge of academic writing in English (Engin 2014: 17).

The results of this study show that choosing their own topic and creating video tutorials helped the students to better understand and learn their chosen area. The students felt that it was important for them to understand their topic in order to be able to explain it to their peers, and therefore put extra effort into learning the academic writing area. According to Engin (2014: 17), this learning process derives from Bloom's taxonomy⁶, where one has to find, evaluate and then summarize information, which then encourages higher thinking skills. The students found the trustworthiness of their peers' presentations questionable and most of them said that they preferred a teacher's explanation to peers' explanations. The students reported in the questionnaire that they would have needed more instructions on how to create their videos (Engin 2014: 21). However, despite these disadvantages the students liked the flipped classroom model since it helped them deepen their knowledge of academic writing in the subject of English, as well as creating an opportunity for active learning to take place (Engin 2014: 20).

Hao (2015) carried out a study in EFL classrooms where the participants were 387 Taiwanese 7th grade students. The aim of this study was to measure the students' flipped classroom readiness. That is, how ready the students were for the transition from a traditional to a flipped classroom model. The background for carrying out the study in an EFL context was based on the hypothesis that the flipped classroom method is useful when learning a SL (Bergmann & Sams 2012 in Hao 2015: 295). The flipped classroom readiness scale (FLRS), which is a combination of two previous reliable sources: the online learning readiness Scale (OLRS) and the information and communications technology (ICT) literacy scale, was used in order to create a self-report survey (Hao 2015: 297). The survey consisted of five different dimensions, which are all necessary components in a flipped classroom: learner control and self-directed learning, technology self-efficacy, motivation for learning, in-class communication self-efficacy and watching the pre-class videos.

After the students had answered the survey, the data was analyzed. The results of the study showed that the students' highest readiness level was for technology self-efficacy, which is in line with what you can expect from so-called 'Digital Natives' who have grown up with information technology

⁶ "Bloom's taxonomy is a classification system used to define and distinguish different levels of human cognition—i.e., thinking, learning, and understanding" (The Glossary of Educational Reform n.d.).

(Hao 2015: 299). The second lowest readiness level was for in-class communication self-efficacy, which could be due to the students being used to a more traditional teacher-centered classroom, instead of the student-centered flipped classroom (Hao 2015: 300). However, the lowest readiness level was for doing previews. That is, to get the students motivated to watch the chosen pre-class material before the lesson. This result demonstrates how important motivation is for the success of second language learning (Hao 2015: 302).

Kasapoglu-Akyol (2010) carried out a study based on an individual interview method in order to see how technology tools can be used to improve language and communicative skills among ESL students. He selected six university ESL students, who came from Turkey, Palestine and Taiwan, based on their computer skills and knowledge of English. The students were in the age group 23-28, and the interviews were held individually for 30-45 minutes. The interview focused on the extent to which they used educational technology outside of the classroom, and if they experienced these tools useful in their comprehension of English. Based on the interviews, Kasapoglu-Akyol drew the conclusion that the ESL learners did use technology as an educational tool outside the classroom. Some of the interviewees used electronic dictionaries to find a corresponding synonym in their first language, which they said eased the process of understanding as well as it saved them time. Further, Kasapoglu-Akyol states that the ESL students felt that the educational tools also helped them improve their communicative language skills (2010: 236-237).

Furthermore, Kasapoglu-Akyol (2010: 238) points out that in today's society we are surrounded by technology. Computers, Internet access, and technology are part of our everyday life, which is why we should take advantage of the possibilities that they present. As Kasapoglu-Akyol (2010) and Hao (2015) state, students of today are 'Digital Natives', which offers apparent reasons to use technology as educational tools in a 21st century classroom.

4.1.1.2. Mixed-Method

Hung (2015) carried out a mixed-method design in order to implement active learning through the flipped classroom in a Taiwanese EFL course. We have chosen to call this study a mixed-method design due to Hung (2015) using both self-evaluating and comparative quasi-experimental methods. The study was carried out by him randomly assigning students of an ESL class into three different groups: a structured, semi-structured and non-flipped control group. At the beginning of the project, all the students did a pre-test in order to measure their receptive skills. The result of this test showed that there were no major differences between the students, most of them were at B1 level in English (Hung 2015: 83). The three groups were all given the same material. However, the structure and

delivery of the material varied between the groups. The non-flipped group had lessons using task-based learning⁷ activities and assigned homework to be completed in a conventional manner. The other two groups had online learning materials called WebQuests⁸ and TED-ed⁹ (Hung 2015: 84). Students in all groups submitted ‘study logs’ to the instructor after each completed lesson throughout the project, which were later analyzed for the data. Furthermore, the students answered a two-part questionnaire at the end of the project, to gauge their learning experiences throughout this process (Hung 2015: 87-88).

The results of this study show how the flipped classroom approach can be used to facilitate ESL learning in a blended learning¹⁰ context. The study shows a generally positive result concerning the student's participation, satisfaction and performance. The flipped classroom model also gave the students the opportunity to preview and review the lesson content based on their own needs and at their own pace. That is, the students could look up words, study unfamiliar concepts and read additional information if they felt the need to do it (Hung 2015: 93). In addition to these results, Hung (2015) came to the same conclusion as previous studies performed in STEM-classroom¹¹ (McGivney-Burelle & Xue 2013 in Hung 2015; Frydenberg 2013 in Hung 2015), which is that most students are more satisfied with a flipped classroom compared to a traditional classroom. Moreover, Hung (2015) also mentions that the flipped classroom is associated with better academic performances in comparison to less effective regular classrooms. In the same way as Kasapoglu-Akyol (2010) and Hao (2015) mentions the advantages using technology as an educational tool in the 21st century classroom, Hung (2015) states that the flipped classroom method is one of the most promising approaches to CALL and active learning.

4.1.2. Empirical Studies with a Non-Language-Learning Subject Area

When reading through our empirical studies with a non-language-learning subject area, we realized that they were all conducted with different methods. Butzler (2016) used a comparative mix-method, Marks (2015) used a self-evaluatory method, and Unruh et al. (2016) used a comparative longitudinal method.

⁷ An approach that is based around the completion of a central task and includes five steps: task, planning, report, analysis, and practice (BBC n.d.).

⁸ “A WebQuest is an inquiry-oriented lesson format in which most or all the information that learners work with comes from the web” (WebQuest n.d.).

⁹ TED-Ed is an online platform for teachers to create videos and for students to interact and get help from the videos posted (TEDed n.d.).

¹⁰ “The term blended learning is generally applied to the practice of using both online and in-person learning experiences when teaching students” (The Glossary of Educational Reform n.d.).

¹¹ STEM stands for science, technology, engineering, and math (Study n.d.).

4.1.2.1. Comparative Mixed-Method

Butzler (2016) carried out a study at an American college with participants aged 18 and above. Based on their high school rank, these students were divided into four different groups: a lecture class, flipped class, stealth and stealth with SRL¹². Butzler (2016: 11) mentions that the combination of SRL and active learning in a flipped classroom provides positive synergistic effect for academically at-risk students. The name 'stealth class' is given by the author due to the instructor not telling the students that their learning environment was of a flipped method class, in contrast to the flipped class who were told that they were in a flipped method learning environment (Butzler 2016: 13). The purpose of this study was to determine which learning environment best suited students of different levels in a general chemistry class at an open-enrolled college (Butzler 2016: 11). The students in the four groups were given different learning materials and instructions by a teacher. At the end of the project, students answered a survey regarding their opinion of the SRL tools (Butzler 2016: 20).

The result from the study showed that many of the students with fair to poor academic preparedness struggled with the transition from being a passive to an active learner. Consequently, Butzler (2016) noticed the same possible problem as Hung (2015) that also pointed out the struggle that can occur during the transition. Moreover, Butzler (2016) came to the conclusion that it is not enough to simply adopt the flipped classroom method in order to increase the students' learning. The students need to be guided and supported by a teacher when it comes to active learning and regulating SRL tools in a flipped classroom (Butzler 2016: 22-23); similarly, Engin (2014) mentions that the students need support, guidance and clear instructions when creating their educational videos.

4.1.2.2. Self-Evaluatory method

Marks (2015) carried out a study at a university course within a teacher education program in the US. The participants in the study consisted of 19 female teacher students who were in the age group of 19-23 years old. The aim of this study was based on the idea that we are in a time of transformation and therefore must adopt new teaching methods even in higher education (Marks 2015: 241). The student teachers were to take a course in pedagogy where the instructor had changed the course design to a flipped classroom model (Marks 2015: 243). All the traditional instructions were changed to digital formats such as slide shares, internet workshops, WebQuests, and online modules (Marks 2015: 244). The students were deliberately sorted into pairs each week

¹² "SRL (Self-regulated learning) is a cyclical process, wherein the student plans for a task, monitors their performance, and then reflects on the outcome "(Sage 2YC n.d.).

where they collaboratively participated in class meetings and took turns at different stations where the focus lay on higher-thinking skills such as analyzing, applying, and creating. The role of the instructor shifted between facilitator and guide since the study aimed at assessing student understanding and scaffolding student learning. The students had to participate in at least eight of the ten meetings. In addition to this, they had to complete a midterm-survey as well as an end-of-term survey (Marks 2015: 244).

The results from the study showed that some features of the flipped classroom method, such as moving instructions online, did facilitate more time for in-class discussions; likewise, the online instructions allowed the students to prepare questions before the class meetings. Furthermore, through this study it became clear that all material put online needs to be clear, explicit, and well explained in order for the students to be able to carry out the tasks (Marks 2015: 246). In accordance with Butzler (2016) and Engin (2014), the results indicate that technology alone is not enough. However, as students became familiar with the flipped classroom model, their confidence grew and they gradually started to take more responsibility for their own studies. Consequently, the flipped classroom model led to a more effective student-centered learning (Marks 2015: 246).

4.1.2.3. Comparative Longitudinal Method

In a three-year longitudinal study, Unruh et al. (2016) compared the beliefs and attitudes of teachers using the flipped versus the traditional classroom. In order to carry out this study twelve teachers, six traditional and six flipped, were selected and matched based on their years of experience, grade level and subject area. The teachers selected for the study were teaching non-language subjects in sixth through twelfth grade within a large suburban school district in Texas, USA. Specific scales were created measuring ‘technology and teaching efficacy’, ‘technology comfort’, Frequency of involvement, and ‘attitude toward technology’ (Unruh et al. 2016: 43-45). All teachers answered surveys which were created based on the above-mentioned scales. Based on the answers given in the survey, their length of experience with both the flipped or traditional class models and subject area, six of the teachers, three flipped and three traditional, were selected for individual interviews. In addition to this, classroom observations were made in all classes (Unruh et al. 2016: 45).

The results of this study show that teachers using the flipped classroom had a higher level of technology and teaching-efficacy (Unruh et al. 2016: 51). The flipped classroom teachers described increased levels of engagement and perseverance in the classroom among their students. One of the flipped classroom teachers said: “Every day I have 100% of my students working on whatever their assignment may be and that doesn’t happen in traditional instruction” (Unruh et al. 2016: 48). In

addition to this, the teachers experienced that they had more time for their students; for example, during the classroom observations one teacher was seen personally interacting with 15 out of his 18 students. The teachers' experiences of having more time for student-interaction presented by Unruh et al. (2016) can be compatible with the results shown by Marks (2015), who demonstrated that the flipped classroom allowed more time for in-class discussions. However, one of the teacher utilizing the traditional classroom explained that technology used incorrectly will disengage the students. Thereby, one can draw the conclusion that technology alone is not enough, just like it has been pointed out through other studies (Butzler 2016; Engin 2014; Marks 2015).

4.2. Review of Practical Guides

This chapter will present the non-empirical studies that we call 'practical guides'. The practical guides are peer-reviewed as well as most of them being published in scientific journals. Therefore we find them valid to function as authentic demonstrations of the flipped classroom method. This chapter will be divided into two sections. The first section presents a practical guide of how to flip the classroom and what one needs to think about when carrying out the method. This section also consists of advantages and challenges that can occur when 'flipping' the classroom. The second section presents how the flipped method can be carried out specifically in a language classroom and highlight the benefits of doing so.

McLaughlin et al. (2016) leads the reader step by step through the core elements of the flipped classroom and acknowledges some common considerations that one can undertake while carrying out the method. Moreover, a Swedish article published on the Swedish National Agency for Education's webpage (Leijon 2016) briefly discusses the advantages as well as the disadvantages of the method based on an American case-study. Mehring (2016) and Muldrow (2013) describe how to 'flip' a language classroom and why it can be a useful method when teaching a SL. In addition to these articles, we have incorporated Bergmann and Sam's book *Flipped Learning - Gateway to Student's Engagement* (2014), which has chapters written by teachers (e.g. Bennett, Kirch and Gudenrath) who have implemented the flipped method in their classrooms.

4.2.1. How to 'Flip' the Classroom

McLaughlin et al. (2016) mention that there are three core elements of the flipped classroom method: pre-class learning, in-class learning, and assessment. Pre-class learning refers to the preparations students are expected to do before the in-class learning, and these are necessary in order for the in-class activity to be as beneficial as possible. In order to execute successful pre-class

learning, McLaughlin et al. (2016: 28-29) give the following advice: prioritize the key foundations of the content, limit the length of pre-class videos to ideally 15-20 minutes, and have a clear connection between the pre-class and in-class activity. Bennett (2014) presents an authentic example of how students can benefit from a pre-class element with the following quote from one of his students: “[Y]ou handed us worksheets that we had to do during and after watching the videos. [... W]e weren’t just blankly staring at the video, but were thinking and doing activities” (Bennet 2014: 61).

The second element involves active learning, which should provide students with opportunities to actively engage in assignments and tasks. Active learning could be asking students to write down answers to the pre-task, which foster articulation as well as allowing ideas to be shared with the rest of the class. Furthermore, McLaughlin et al. (2016: 31) point out that the teacher should avoid double lecturing, which means that the pre-task should not be lectured again during class as it contradicts the idea of flipped learning and instead limits active participation. Moreover, it is important to provide scaffolding to the students when the transition from the simple concepts they learn during the pre-task toward more complex ideas that are dealt with during an in-class activity (McLaughlin et al. 2016: 31).

Assessment, the third core element of the flipped classroom, aims at higher cognitive skill development. Using both formative and summative approaches can lead to the desired outcome. Hedge (2000: 377) explains that formative assessment has its focus on the process of learning, which is to keep track of the student’s learning progress and identifying ways to help the learner throughout the learning period. Summative assessment has its focus on the learner’s results, which is identifying achievement levels and comparing the learner’s results with the levels in order to measure their achievements. McLaughlin et al. (2016: 31) claim that using these two approaches can lead to providing students with important feedback as well as giving the instructor an overview of the class efficacy and student learning. In addition, the instructor can use the information in order to determine common misconceptions among students and correct them by immediately providing the class with a short lecture or explanation.

However, it is crucial to have an aligned assessment throughout the whole learning period in order to achieve the desired learning. Furthermore, the article states the importance of ‘closing the loop’, that is, avoiding open ended-tasks that lack a clear answer at the end of the learning period. Introducing new material toward the end of a learning cycle may confuse as well as create new challenges for the students (McLaughlin et al. 2016: 32).

In an article from the Swedish National Agency of Education by Leijon (2016), the advantages and disadvantages of the flipped classroom based on an American case study is discussed. The study was carried out among 200 Math and Science teachers utilizing the method. The advantages found due to the method were: allowing a teacher more time for each student as well as more time for classroom discussions, students becoming more involved in their own learning process as well as reflecting more in both in-class and out-of-class time. In addition, students who have not been able to participate during class get the same content as their peers through the online videos, which is one practical advantage of this method. The two main challenges were getting students to watch the pre-task videos and be prepared for the in-class activity, and making sure the pre-task was of a good quality and suitable for the target group (Leijon 2016). A possible solution to the issue of getting students to actually do the pre-task is creating an environment in the classroom where the purpose and expectations of the pre-task are apparent from the very beginning (McLaughlin et al. 2016: 29).

4.2.2. Applying the Flipped Method in an SL Classroom

Communicative practice needs to be a part of the learning process in order for students to develop their communicative language ability (Hedge 2000: 57). Mehring (2016: 2) presents how the flipped classroom provides EFL students with a great opportunity to use the target language during the in-class activities. These opportunities occur through collaborative learning experiences, which deepen and advance students' use of language as well as provide them with immediate teacher feedback. In addition, the student-centered classroom provided by the flipped model enables students to use the target language in more authentic situations, as the in-class communication tends to be more spontaneous (Mehring 2016: 6).

Muldrow (2013) presents the beneficial changes experienced by an American high school teacher when she began utilizing the flipped method in her SL classroom. This teacher recalled how she used to struggle with not being able to teach all her students at the same time. Some of her students were fast learners, while others needed more time. The teacher states that grammar explanations in textbooks are not always so clear, and by recording her own videos she could offer clear, thorough, and standardized grammar explanations (Muldrow 2013: 29). By 'flipping' the classroom students could, according to their own needs, view and review the material in their own pace. This facilitated the teacher's struggle of reaching students on different language levels (Muldrow 2013: 29).

Gudenrath (2014: 114), a teacher of English, recorded a MLA-formatting¹³ guide to save time and avoid having to reteach the same instructions over and over again. She teaches every new class the MLA-formatting once, then she refers students to the recorded style-guide. This is how Gudenrath (2014: 114) explains her method: “If students consistently get the format incorrect, I can redirect them to the video and have them give me a concise summary of the expectations and create a template that they can use for all their papers going forward”. In addition to the time saved by ‘flipping’ the classroom, Gudenrath (2014: 118-119) experienced other positive effects due to the method. She claims that there was a notable increase in engagement in all her classes and that the students did not only meet but exceeded her expectations as students’ performances had increased significantly and they scored above the international average (Gudenrath 2014: 120).

¹³ “MLA (modern language association) style is most commonly used to write papers and cite sources within the liberal arts and humanities” (Online Writing Lab n.d.).

5. Discussion and Conclusions

In this chapter we discuss the findings of this literature review in relation to our research questions, starting with the advantages and disadvantages of the flipped classroom method. Secondly, we discuss our second research question regarding how to use the method in an EFL and ESL classroom based on the results found. Furthermore, the discussion will also bring up the lack of studies, both Swedish and international, in the field of the flipped classroom in an EFL and ESL classroom and why this may be the case. In addition, a conclusion will be drawn from what has been found. We will finish of this chapter with suggestions for further research within the field of utilizing the flipped method in an ESL, EFL or SL classroom.

5.1. Discussion

The overall findings from the empirical studies and the practical guides are that the flipped classroom method is well suited for students of today. Hao (2015) refers to the students as ‘digital natives’ and Kasapoglu-Akylo (2010) points out that we live in a society where we are constantly surrounded by technology. However, an important aspect that is pointed out by several authors (Butzler 2016; Engin 2014; Marks 2015; Unruh et al. 2016) is the fact that technology by itself is not enough. In other words, a teacher cannot simply add technology tools to the in-class activities and expect a facilitated classroom environment with engaged students. Correct usage of educational tools is important. The method is a way to adapt the education to the students and to make them more engaged.

Despite increased student engagement, the transition from passive to active learning, as well as the transition from a teacher-centered to student-centered environment are factors that some of the sources note as obstacles for the student when utilizing the method of the flipped model (Butzler 2016; Hao 2015; McLaughlin et al. 2016). Consequently, students will need guidance in a flipped classroom in order to achieve a successful outcome. As Unruh et al. (2016) and Engin (2014) state, students must have the support of a teacher when carrying out various projects that the flipped model requires. Another recurring finding from the empirical studies and the practical guides is the discussion about how the flipped classroom enhances teacher and student relations due to allowing more time for students’ individual needs. The time a teacher has for helping one student is very limited in a class of at least 30 (Muldrow 2013). Many authors (Muldrow 2013; Leijon 2016; Hung 2015; Unruh et al. 2016) state that the flipped classroom allows more one-on-one time for each student’s individual needs, which correlates with the rationale behind the method (Flipped learning n.d.).

When utilizing the flipped method in a language classroom, some of the authors (Hung 2015; Mehring 2016) noted that more time was spent using the target language during the in-class activity. Another important feature found when applying the flipped method is the increase in responsibility that students gradually learned to take for their own learning. This led to students being involved in their own learning as well as adjusting the learning to fit their own needs (Hung 2015; Muldrow 2013). However, as Hao (2015) and Leijon (2016) found, not all students are ready for the responsibility that the method requires. Having students do the pre-work in order for the in-class activity to be as beneficial as possible is one of the most challenging obstacles of the flipped method (McLaughlin 2016).

Marks (2016) and Leijon (2016) both note that the flipped classroom leads to an increase in discussion during the in-class activity, which can be connected with the aim of the subject of English. The Swedish curriculum (Skolverket 2011: 10) states that the students should be given opportunities where they can develop their communicative abilities and use them in meaningful contexts. The flipped classroom creates well-suited environments where discussions can take place as the in-class activities aim at all students being engaged, applying concepts and sharing ideas (McLaughlin 2016; Leijon 2016; Flipped Learning n.d.). Moreover, Muldrow (2013) and Gudenrath (2014) demonstrate that creating educational videos saved them time from having to explain the same content over and over again, and also allowed students to rewatch the videos in their own pace.

To summarize, all sources acknowledge that there are many advantages of utilizing the flipped classroom method. However, many authors also observe the possible disadvantages when applying the model; it does take time and needs to be carried out properly in order to achieve the desired outcome. In addition, students need to be prepared and scaffolded through the process from passive to active learners as well as through the transition from a teacher-centered to a student-centered environment, as students can be disengaged rather than engaged if not properly instructed. Furthermore, regarding the applicability of the flipped classroom in an EFL or ESL classroom, studies show that it is beneficial to use this method as it enhances students' use of the target language during in-class activities. Utilizing the flipped model in a language classroom can also provide teachers with the opportunity to record educational videos, which they can refer students to instead of spending valuable in-class time on having to repeatedly explain content that many students struggle with.

5.2. Conclusions

In this final chapter we will present conclusions that we can draw from the studies used throughout this literature review. One aim of our thesis was to look for what advantages and disadvantages the flipped classroom method has and whether one can use it in an EFL or ESL classroom. Having our first research question in mind, we can draw the overall conclusion that the flipped classroom has many positive qualities on different levels. For example, improvement of teacher and student relations, increased engagement and responsibility from students, creating more opportunities for in-class discussions and allowing students to learn at their own pace among many other positive effects. As we did not only look for studies with a language-subject area, we found that the method allows teachers of all subjects to be creative and innovative in their assessment of applying the flipped model. Nevertheless, there are also disadvantages of the method which we have acknowledged during this literature review. For example, ‘flipping’ a classroom is a process which takes time since there are many aspects that needs to be considered, such as: the transition for students, recording videos and posting them online, dealing with technical problems that can occur during activities etc. Consequently, the flipped model requires a teacher that is fully aware of the amount of effort and time that has to be dedicated to the method in order to carry out a successful ‘flip’.

Looking at our second research question, how the method can be used in the English as a second language classroom, we can draw the conclusion that the flipped classroom method is suitable for the subject of ESL in Sweden. Several authors noted that students struggled with the transition from a ‘traditional classroom’ to a ‘flipped’ one. However, the majority of our studies were carried out in Asia, and we can comprehend that there are differences between a Swedish upper secondary classroom and an Asian classroom. The definition of a ‘traditional classroom’ in the articles is not the standard Swedish classroom. The Swedish curriculum for the subject of English has a communicative approach, which means that most Swedish students are used to being active learners in a student-centered environment. Consequently, the transitions to a flipped classroom should be easier in Sweden, compared to a country where the norm is a teacher-centered classroom with passive learners. In addition, the flipped method enables some of the concepts which the communicative classroom is based upon. For example, the method increases in-class discussion activities, which should lead to more spontaneous conversations since the students are supposed to discuss the pre-work during class. Moreover, the flipped classroom method also has support in the Swedish Curriculum, since the aim is for the students to take responsibility for their own learning process and gradually receive independent tasks to perform (Skolverket 2011: 10).

5.3. Further Research

One of the aims of our literature review was to find and discuss how the flipped method can be applied to an ESL classroom. Unfortunately, due to the lack of research being done regarding the flipped model in an EFL or ESL classroom, we were not pleased with the amount of studies that we could find and use when answering this research question. Because of this, we suggest further studies within the field of the flipped method in an ESL or EFL classroom. It would be interesting if one carried out a study that focused primarily on measuring student performances in writing, reading, listening and communicative comprehension in a quasi-experimental study when applying the ‘flipped’ method in an EFL or ESL classroom. Furthermore, as mentioned, there is a lack of studies conducted within this field in a Swedish context. Therefore, we suggest further research that is conducted in Sweden where one looks specifically at ESL or EFL teaching when utilizing the flipped classroom.

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Appendix

We started our writing process by discussing many different topics within the subject of English. However, during an initial brainstorming we rather quickly came to the conclusion that we both found the flipped classroom method interesting. As soon as we had decided on a topic to write about, we began searching for relevant literature. The entire literature search was done together and each new source found was discussed before being added to our reference list. After having presented our idea and our initial reference list to our supervisor, Nigel Musk, he helped us find additional sources as well as helping us narrow down our research question.

When we had found enough resources to carry out this literature review, we divided them equally between us. We read the sources separately and presented the most important and relevant parts to each other. We then exchanged articles in order to see if more information could be gained, which perhaps the first reader could have missed. After reading all the articles, we discussed them and decided that some of them were not of relevance for our field of study and were therefore dismissed. We did not divide the writing process between us; we wrote all parts of the thesis together. Our reason for doing so is that we thought this would be the most equal and fair way to get both our ideas and opinions across. It also facilitated the work, as we were able to immediately discuss and solve obstacles that occurred along the way. Throughout this process of writing the literature review, we met our supervisor on a weekly basis. Being provided with continual feedback as well as having distinct sub targets eased the writing process and helped us move forward.

I, Yasmin Ali, am very pleased with my companionship with Maja Säberg during this process. Knowing each other very well from the beginning and having worked together earlier made the writing process enjoyable. We agreed on using Google docs because we were not always in the same place. However, most of the time we were, but it was easy to use this tool as one could do the talking and one would write at the same time. As we did write the whole thesis together I cannot state that one has done more than the other so the co-operation has been good. We divided the workload equally and helped, as well as supported, each other along the way. As was mentioned, we know each other very well and could therefore acknowledge each other's strengths and weaknesses in the best way possible all the time.

I, Maja Säberg fully agree with the statements made by Yasmin Ali; this companionship has been most pleasurable. Our close friendship has definitely been an asset during this writing process; we are used to working together and know how to support each other in the best possible way. Almost all the writing period was done together; therefore, the workload was divided equally between us. Being able to spend almost all the time located in the same place allowed us to take advantages of each other's strengths and make up for each other's weaknesses.