



## A Flipped Learning Pedagogy: Strengths & Weaknesses

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### Abstract

This paper investigates the strengths and weaknesses of Flipped Learning. The paper reviews the contents of 71 studies and articles on Flipped Learning published in a period from 2010 to 2019. Flipped Learning pedagogy is a student-centered active learning approach, and it uses constructivism-learning theory based on hands-on practical learning. Flipped Learning pedagogy has accelerated its adoption among educators after 2011, and it is even growing faster after 2015. The teaching approach uses modern teaching technology. As the popularity of the method grows, there are more findings on the weakness of Flipped Learning as well. The strength of this teaching approach is suitable for urban and more developed countries where the technical support system is better. Flipped Learning gives benefits to nourish self-directed learning and active learning, create a social environment, collaborative and teamwork with more exposure to different teaching activities with the student-centered learning approach. However, a major weakness of the method is a decrease in achievement test scores from Flipped learning. It also decreases the learners' motivation over a period of time (Moran, 2018).

**Keywords:** *Flipped Learning, Flipped Classroom, Strength and Weakness of Flipped Learning*

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### 1. Introduction

Flipped Learning is interactive and active learning that instruction moves from the group learning space to the individual learning space where the instructor gives the learners a central point in teaching (Bergmann & Sams, 2014). Flipped Learning has become a hot topic in teaching methodology (Wang, An & Wright, 2018). The teaching method has grown from a term known as Flipped Classroom to a more refined and modernized term known as Flipped Learning where the two terms are used interchangeably according to Hwang & Lai (2017) because the two approaches are strikingly similar nature in teaching and learning even though other scholars defined the two as distinctive teaching approaches. The two terms and their execution in teaching and learning have a very similar approach. Flipped Learning has become more popular, and teachers have started picking up the new method in different countries around the world (Ozdamli & Asiksoy, 2016, p. 104). This teaching method has been used extensively in higher education than in lower education. This methodology is used in teaching almost all subject areas (Jeong, Gómez & Cañada, 2016; Yıldırım, 2017; Kurt, 2017; Alnuhayt, 2018); however, the method is used more preferably in STEM subjects -Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (Lundin et al., 2018). Today, Flipped Learning is also used in teaching language. Flipped Learning is a promising approach in teaching EFL (Hsieh, Wu & Marek, 2017). Flipped learning gives positive perceptions to learners, which are confirmed in numerous studies (Al-Harbi & Alshumaimeri, 2016; Su-Young, & Suk-Jin, 2017; Afrilyasanti, Cahyono & Astuti, 2017; Kurt, 2017; Unal & Unal, 2017; Lin, Hwang, Fu & Chen, 2018). Achievement scores of students are argumentative as different findings show different results, some showing better scores and some others showing scores negatively. The teaching method results in better achievement scores among the students (Ginola et al., 2016; Gasmi & Ahmed, 2016; Sirakaya & Özdemir, 2018). There are definitely mixed reactions among the students and teachers on using Flipped Learning. Some scholars' findings suggested that Flipped Learning is not an effective teaching method (Mori and Omari, 2016; Yang, 2017; Jia, 2017; Song, 2019; McKie, 2019). Therefore, there are splitting opinions among scholars and students on the usage of Flipped Learning as a pedagogical approach. Flipped Learning is a teaching approach using modern technology (Hwang, Lai & Wang, 2015). The usage of technology has resulted in another matter of discussion, splitting into positive and negative views. A few studies have confirmed convincing pieces of evidence of distraction and harmful learning outcomes due to technology dependence on learning (McCoy, 2016; O'Brien, 2018; Eleanor, 2018). On the other hand, there are pieces of evidence too that the present generation kids who are known as



Generation-Z, and digital natives have benefited from using modern technology that the Flipped Learning method is relying on (Wong, 2016, p. 7; Wen-Chi et al, 2017, p. 142-157). Therefore, this paper is to investigate the strengths and weaknesses of the Flipped Learning methodology.

## 2. Objectives

The objective of this paper is to identify the strengths and weaknesses of Flipped Learning.

## 3. Flipped Learning

This section discusses the history and characteristics of Flipped Learning, roles of teachers and students in a Flipped Learning.

### 3.1 History of Flipped Learning

The Flipped Learning methodology has originated from King's (1993) work "*From Sage on the Stage to Guide on the Side*". The original basic concept was teaching outside the classroom and giving learners the central point of learning in the classroom where the teacher stays aside, giving scaffold, monitoring, and helping the learning process. When the concept of teaching out-of-classroom through video-recorded lectures began, there did not exist the term of Flipped Learning as we see today. Then, in 1997, Eric Mazur taught Physics lessons out-of-classroom with recorded video lectures at Harvard University. Baker started using the term *Classroom Flip* in 2000 at a presentation at the conference at Cedarville College for the first time (Baker, 2001). In 2000, Lage, Platt, and Treglia used a term called "*Inverting the Classroom*". Since then, terms such as *Flipped Classroom* and *Inverted Classroom* have been used. Flipped Classroom is a commonly used term. The sudden growth of this teaching methodology has happened after 2011. One of the reasons for accelerating the growth of Flipped Classroom was the rapid growth of digital information and technology because the Flipped Learning approach uses modern technology as an essential component in teaching. In 2014, a new term, which is known as Flipped Learning, came into existence with a more refined definition (Bergmann, & Sams, 2012; 2014). The rapid growth of the Internet, computer, online, YouTube, and mobile technology has boosted the growth of Flipped Learning (Hwang, Lai, & Wang, 2015; Choe, & Seong, 2016). The growth of Flipped Learning and research studies has expanded more rapidly after 2015, along with the evolution of modern technology (Filiz, & Benzet, 2018; Shyr & Chen, 2018).

Bergmann and Sams (2014) were two chemistry teachers who gave a strong influence on the growth of Flipped Learning (Gasparič, 2017, p. 174). Salman Khan (2014) established Khan Academy online teaching that became very popular, giving another strong influence on the growth of Flipped Learning. In the past few years, it has become even more popular, and this teaching method reaches different parts of the world that was initially confined only in developed countries where technology development was concentrated (Ozdamlı, & Asiksoy, 2016, p. 104). Flipped Learning stands out its popularity as a new teaching method (Heng, 2014; Yarbrow, Arfstrom, McKnight, & McKnight, 2014; Abeysekera & Dawson, 2015; Lo, Lie & Hew, 2018; Tseng, Lin & Chen, 2018). Researchers had experimented the teaching method in the USA, but today, it is spreading to developing countries. Jonathan Bergmann and Errol St. Clair Smith launched the Flipped Learning Global Initiative on 27 June 2016 to train teachers, and this has brought another level of popularity in Flipped Learning (flglobal.org, 2016).

### 3.2 Characteristics of Flipped Learning

Flipped Learning is based on constructivism learning theory (Ziling & Yeli, 2018). Constructivism learning theory was postulated by Jean Piaget (1896-1980). The learning theory describes that it is practical, hands-on, and real-world situation and knowledge is constructed through applying learners' experiences.

Learning tasks that are assigned as homework for a traditional method are assigned as classwork in a Flipped Learning approach. Unlike a traditional teaching method, Flipped Learning begins learning new knowledge from home before reaching the classroom, and it is known as pre-class learning. Pre-Class learning

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promotes self-learning or autonomous learning using digital technologies (Abdelshaheed, 2017, p. 97) through the Internet, and task supposed to be homework in traditional learning is brought into the classroom. Therefore, a Flipped Learning is characterized by out-of-classroom learning as well as in-class lecture method (Temizyürek & Ünlü, 2015; Jenkins, 2017, p. 7). Thus, Flipped Learning is associated with blended learning, which is online out-of-classroom learning and face-to-face classroom learning.

Flipped Learning could be divided into two components: In-class and Out-of-Class learning (Hwang & Lai, 2017). Out-of-Class learning could also be divided into two, which are Pre-class and Post-class Activities (Unal & Unal, 2017, p. 147; Shih & Tsai, 2017, p. 36).

### *3.2.1 Out-of-Class Learning Activities*

Out-Of-Classroom learning activities of Flipped Learning focus on self-directed learning (Zainuddin, 2017) that happens outside the classroom. They are divided into two as a. Pre-class Activity, and b. Post-class Activity.

#### **a. Pre-class Activity**

Students watch pre-recorded video lessons, read the resources, and take pre-class quizzes during pre-class activity (Overmyer & Yestness, 2016, p. 38; Abdelshaheed, 2017, p. 103; Jenkins et al., 2017, p. 7). Video lesson is a predominant learning activity in a Flipped Learning pre-class activity. It improves the knowledge of the students, and it gives a significantly higher proficiency and higher satisfaction in learning (Zhonggen, 2019). The activities help to acquire better knowledge and warm-up for in-class learning, and they are a good warm-up for full swing discussion in classroom learning (Houston, 2012; Afrilyasanti, Cahyono & Astuti, 2017; Hwang & Lai, 2017, p. 195). Thus, a pre-class activity makes the students ready for in-class learning.

There are criticisms for self-directed video watching in out-of-class learning. Some learners prefer having direct lectures rather than watching video independently, and there is an issue of demotivation when the same video is played due to boredom (Afrilyasanti et al., 2017, p. 482, 477)

#### **b. Post-class Activities**

It is the activities after the classroom learning. It involves giving and collecting feedback, taking quizzes, writing reflection and diary, etc. Even though it might not carry out all the activities mentioned above, it is a reinforcement of learning (Shih & Tsai, 2017, p. 36; Yean, 2019, p. 334) increasing the learning goal (Persky & McLaughlin, 2017, p. 6).

### *3.2.2 In-Class Learning Activities*

In-class learning is face-to-face learning in the classroom. Various learning activities are set for a productive and enhancing time used to create an active learning environment. In-class learning activities are a combination of individual work, pair-work, collaborative teamwork, and presentation (Jeong, Gómez & Cañada, 2016, p. 750; Unal & Unal, 2017, p. 146, 157; Afrilyasanti, Cahyono & Astuti, 2017, p. 476). The Activities supposed to be homework for a traditional method are usually done in the classroom in Flipped Learning. In Flipped Learning, different learning activities such as individual work, pair-work, collaborative teamwork, student presentation, homework in class, peer feedback, reflection/feedback writing, diary writing, quiz, worksheet- solve problems, and others are created to bring multiple approaches of classroom learning.

### *3.3 Roles of A Teacher*

The roles of teachers are making a video, making a quiz, sending learning resources, collecting and giving feedback to students, encouraging the students during pre-class, in-class, and post-class activities and managing a more conducive learning environment (Bergmann & Sams, 2012; 2014). Facilitating, managing to learn, and effective guiding the students are the duty of a teacher (Ziling & Yeli, 2018, p. 884). The teacher creates a conducive and student-centered learning environment which is suitable for the group, individual, and collaborative learning that could enhance students' learning to fit in different learning activities (Cukurbasi & Kiyici, 2018, p. 47).



### 3.4 Roles of Students

Self-directed learning is one of the most important focal points of Flipped Learning (Zainuddin et al., 2019; Zhang, 2017; Yıldırım, 2017; Jenkins et al., 2017, p. 11). Students should watch video lessons, read the assigned materials, take the quizzes from home and do the follow-up activities (Abdelshaheed, 2017, p. 104; Ziling & Yeli, 2018, p. 880). The roles of the students are to be active learners, active participant and to construct their own knowledge. In this methodology, students also take responsibility for learning by using discovery and exploratory learning approaches (Ziling & Yeli, 2018).

## 4. Findings

### 4.1 Strengths and Weaknesses of Flipped Learning

Flipped Learning has been seen as a winning teaching methodology by many; however, there are a number of weaknesses of this pedagogical implication. The approach has not been investigated properly when the growth of this approach began accelerated by 2013 (Hamdan et al., 2013). Despite the majority of the researchers' feedback as positive, there are serious warnings against the use of Flipped Learning as well (Smulian, 2019). There are advantages and disadvantages of Flipped Learning. They are shown in the following table

**Table 1** Strengths and Weaknesses of Flipped Learning

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Student-centered</li> <li>■ Active learning</li> <li>■ Self-learning</li> <li>■ Self-responsibility</li> <li>■ Effective time management</li> <li>■ Readiness increases</li> <li>■ Replay of video</li> <li>■ Flexible learning</li> <li>■ Hands-on learning</li> <li>■ Personalize learning</li> <li>■ More time for special needs</li> <li>■ Collaborative work</li> <li>■ Problem-solving</li> <li>■ Critical thinking</li> <li>■ Learning styles</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Without computers and the Internet, it will not work well.</li> <li>■ No immediate explanation when video lessons got issues of understanding.</li> <li>■ Not all learners willing to watch video</li> <li>■ Video production not attractive as professional multimedia makers</li> <li>■ Digital divide and the social-economic gap are to be addressed</li> <li>■ Much time is taken for teachers to prepare a lecture.</li> <li>■ Technology and attention diversion</li> <li>■ Affect achievement scores negatively</li> <li>■ Motivation decrease over a period of time</li> </ul>

### 4.1 Strengths of Flipped Learning

There are numerous advantages of Flipped Learning over the traditional teaching method (Shih & Tsai, 2017, p. 32-46; Karaaslan & Çelebi, 2017, p. 644). It gives positive learning experiences (Lin & Hwang, 2018, p. 215; Suranakkharin, 2017; Shih & Tsai, 2017, p. 32-47). The approach is student-centered and active learning (Bergmann & Sams, 2014). The teaching approach trains the learners to have more self-responsibility and self-reliance in learning (Clark et al., 2018, p. 13; Abdelshaheed, 2017, p. 97; Ziling & Yeli, 2018, p. 886). It increases effective time management in a classroom (Davenport, 2018, p. 30). As the lecture videos are sent beforehand, learners are in readiness mode (Kozikoğlu, 2019, p. 859). Students can proceed at their



own learning pace as the video lecture can be replayed repeatedly and paused at any time. Flipped Learning gives more flexibility, and learning content is designed to be more personalized (Springen, 2013). The learning approach is hands-on and practical (Ziling & Yeli, 2018). It gives more time for special needs in the classroom (Thaichay & Sitthitikul, 2016). Flipped Learning increases social skills through collaborative teamwork (Afrilyasanti, Cahyono & Astuti, 2017, p. 476-484; Jeong, Gómez & Cañada, 2016, p. 747-758; Shih and Tsai, 2017, p. 33-49). Flipped Learning can improve problem-solving skills (Wen & Chun, 2017, p. 41) and critical thinking (Mohammed & Ahlam, 2018; Liu & Sukavatee, 2019). Flipped Learning addresses the difficulty of multiple learning styles in a single classroom (Uzunboylu et al., 2015)

#### 4.2 Weaknesses of Flipped Learning

Recent study findings show a number of weaknesses of Flipped Learning. This teaching method depends on modern technology with an Internet connection. When there is no Internet connection, there will be no success in Flipped Learning (Halili, Abdul Razak & Zainuddin, 2014). Therefore, Flipped Learning is for urban school or more developed countries where technical supports are available. Flipped Learning is very much pushing the learners for self-learning and self-watching the video lecture, and learners are demotivated and discouraged when there came the issue of inability to understand the contents as no teacher is found to help in self-learning environment, which is the problem when using this method in lower education (Afrilyasanti et al., 2017, p. 482, 477). Not all learners enjoy self-watching video lectures (Soliman, 2016). Above all, the video made by the teachers could not be as interesting as the videos created by professional multimedia people (Correa, 2015). Another issue is the haves and have-nots of technology cause even a wider gap of the digital divide that gives advantages to only students having such technology (Springen, 2013). Teachers wasted lots of valuable time in an effort to create video and lecture in front of the computer (Thaichay & Sitthitikul, 2016). Recent studies confirmed the negative impacts of learning with technology due to distraction and attention diversion, which cause a severe impact on achievement test scores (Wexler, 2019; McKie, 2019). Such poor achievement scores due to Flipped Learning have surfaced from recent studies (Joshua & Terry, 2017; Su-Young & Suk-Jin, 2017, p. 69; Chi-Jen & Gwo-Jen, 2018, p. 216). Another adverse effect of Flipped Learning is a decrease in the motivation of learners over a period of time (Moran, 2018)

### 5. Conclusion and Recommendation

Flipped Learning is a teaching methodology using modern technology of digital devices, information, and technology through the Internet. It has its own strengths and weaknesses. It promotes social and collaborative teamwork learning skills, and it trains the learners to be more self-directed learning. As the present-day kids of Generation-Z become digital natives, learners are closely connected to technology and Flipped Learning seems to be the right choice because the integration of technology becomes stronger day by day. However, as far as achievement test score is concerned, Flipped learning is not a winner of a teaching approach (Joshua & Terry, 2017; Su-Young & Suk-Jin, 2017, p. 69). It is obvious from the findings that technology-based learning increases the distraction and attention diversion. However, varieties of learning activities and learning experiences build value-added skills that could not be measured through achievement test. In order to extract the best of Flipped Learning, one should look for the middle ground of using technology by not overusing it so that learning experiences and achievement test scores benefit from the approach.

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