

A FLIPPED CLASSROOM: A TEFL COURSE DESIGN TO FOSTER STUDENTS' LEARNING

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Abstract

The issue deals with changing the trademark of university lecture has been examined. For years, university lecture is closely related to the traditional teaching. This grounding reason leads to the idea of changing the traditional and classic lecture model into a new concept, namely flipped classroom. The flipped classroom offers new way of learning in which it encourages independent and student-centered learning as well as active classroom. This study investigated two research questions: (1) how do TEFL lecturers help students to comprehend the learning materials better than traditional teaching? (2) to what extent does the flipped classroom concept lead to success in the TEFL class than the traditional teaching? This study used Action Research as its design. The subjects of the study were 122 TEFL students at a state university in Magelang. The result showed that from two major problems of students' low motivation and passive participation, the use of flipped classroom has changed the students' behavior and attitude towards the TEFL course and the notion of flipped classroom is successfully implemented.

Keywords: flipped classroom, action research, teaching English as a foreign language

Introduction

The issue deals with changing the trademark of university lecture has been examined. For years, university lecture is closely related to the traditional teaching. As a classic method, traditional teaching has its main characteristics, in which the hierarchy of teaching places lecturer as the uppermost knowledgeable person. Students rely on the teachers' explanation and concept. Lecturers have the most dominant power on the learning materials. It has been lead by a common assumption that content courses are hard to be understood. Students will be well informed, if they pay attention to the lecturers' explanation. One of the side effects on this teaching system is that it leads the students to have low motivation on independent learning.

One of the courses that may be considered as the content course is TEFL course. It focuses on the knowledge of Teaching English as a Foreign Language. In this course, students have to master basic knowledge of teaching English based on age level, proficiency level and skills. From time to time, TEFL lecture is one-way lecture in which it emphasizes on giving and feeding knowledge to the students. Or, students sometimes are divided into some groups and present chapter per chapter. Both lecture models have benefits and drawbacks. The first lecture model will give ample knowledge to the students but they tend to be lazy to read and they are going to wait lecturers' explanation. The presentation lecture model, probably, is assumed as better solution than the first one. However, students tend to focus on the certain chapter, as they required to present, and they wont care about other chapters.

This grounding reason leads to the idea of changing the traditional and classic lecture model into a new concept, namely flipped classroom. The flipped classroom offers new way of learning in which it encourages independent and student-centered learning as well as active classroom (Tomlinson & Allan, 2000). On the basis, students learn the forthcoming topics from the video provided by the lecturers. They have to watch and comprehend the video as

use it as the prior knowledge. In class activity, students are going to be actively involved in the discussion. Thus, it is believed that it can foster students' learning on TEFL. In this project, we address two research questions to be investigated, as follows:

How do TEFL lecturers help students to comprehend the learning materials better than traditional teaching?

To what extent does the flipped classroom concept lead to success in the TEFL class than the traditional teaching?

Methodology

The research design used was Action Research (AR). It is agreed that AR works best in improving students' learning and teaching quality, and it fits with the aforesaid research questions. Coined by Kurt Lewin in 1946, he describes Action Research as the research with spiral steps, which compare conditions of social problems and their effects on social actions. In this research, it was done two cycles of Cycle I (Februari – April 2017) and Cycle II (April-June 2017). Each cycle had four main phases of planning, acting, observing, and reflecting. The participants of the study are 112 students who were sitting in the fourth semester students in the academic year of 2016/2017 and taking TEFL course, at English Department of Tidar University. In this study, we utilized several instruments such as (i) observation sheet, (ii) interview guide, and (iii) questionnaire. The observation sheet was used for documenting the qualitative data such as behavior, activities, and other activity during the process. The interview guide was to dig more detailed data on attitudes, opinions, or insights from other teachers (teaching team) and students. The questionnaire was given to record students' point of view toward the learning process. Opting for the techniques needed for collecting the data is strongly related with the instruments used. In doing the observation, the researchers acted as direct observers. It means that the researchers were watching rather than taking part. Another technique used was interviewing another teachers (teaching team) and students. This interview session was recorded. The last technique for collecting the data was questionnaire, which was given to the students. This research used qualitative data analysis of Milles and Huberman's model (1994). This analysis model has three main steps such data reduction, data display, conclusion drawing and verification.

Findings and Discussion

As it has been mentioned earlier and reflected in its title, the purpose of this action research was to evaluate the effect of a flipped classroom model in a TEFL course to foster students' learning. Thus, this part discussed about the research findings of the implementation action research. As the whole process, the implementation of action research involved two cycles, in which the cycle 1 was done between the first mid-term (Februari – April 2017) and cycle 2 was the second mid-term (April-June 2017). All the two stages covered the four stages of planning, acting, observing, and reflecting.

Pre-Cycle Activity

Ahead of four stages implemented in the cycle 1, a problem raised to solve was that the

implementation of traditional teaching in the TEFL course lead bad critiques. The first critiques was about the low motivation of the students. Divided into four classes, the students had similar behavior and attitude towards to TEFL course 1. On the first meeting when the lecturers introduced the book required to read entitled “Key Issues in Language Teaching” written by Jack C. Richards (2015) which has more than 800 pages, they tended to reject the ideas. In principal, the TEFL course 1 specifically aims to building their knowledge on how to teach English in the Indonesia or in the foreign context, as compared to other countries. The low motivation of the students was clearly seen from one meeting to another meeting, in which they did not really comprehend the chapters about. They tended to read the book if they knew that they would have tests. Another indicator before the cycle started was the sitting position of the students. Most of the students tend to sit with slump or slouch position. It could be assumed that they were less interested in taking the teaching course. They took the course since it was compulsory for them to take at the department. Tracing back to their motivation, most of the students love learning English but they did not really like the idea of being a teacher as their future career. However, since the university only serves English Education study program, they took it. Or, in other words, they did not have any interest on the concept of teaching courses.

This low motivation then affects their behavior during the classroom activity. Traditional teaching leads the concept of lecturers becoming the only resources to the class. They did not engage to the classroom activity and had minimum participation during the meetings. They tended to listen what the lecturers explained to them rather than reading the text by themselves. Around 30 students sitting in one class for about 100 minutes, only one or two students asked questions about the materials, and the rest remained silent.

These problems lead us as the TEFL lecturers to change their perception, behavior, and attitude towards the course. So, as it was stated in the chapter one, we proposed two research questions (1) how we as the TEFL lecturers help them to change their attitude and comprehend the learning materials better than the traditional teaching, and (2) if we implement a concept of flipped classroom will it lead to success than traditional teaching.

Cycle 1 Activity

As it has been stated earlier, the cycle 1 was done in the first mid-term starting from February to April 2017, which took for about eight meetings of planning, acting, observing, and reflecting.

The first step we took to consider was planning. The perception, behavior, and attitude they had had earlier about TEFL and teaching course need to be flipped. We planned with the use of flipped classroom in our classes. On the basis, we would ask the students to watch videos about the chapters ahead the meeting started. As we thought, the use of video might lead their interest and motivation to learn how to teach English in Indonesian context. We prepared the learning syllabus and lesson plan for each meeting. As the acting stage started, we began to implement our plan by having learning contract. One of the clauses on our contract was asked them to form group of 3 who had the responsibility to download and share 4 or 5-minute videos to the class several days before the meeting. We agreed to have a WhatsApp group, where the videos could be posted.

To boost their interest, we also agreed to act as teachers by dress neatly and properly,

as we called it as TEFL day. All students would dress like a real teacher without wearing any denim materials and proper shoes.

The acting stage of each meeting was observed carefully to get accurate information whether our planned ran well or not. For each meeting, we documented the problems that we faced during the acting stage. In this case observation went at the same time with the acting stages. As we planned to end the first acting and observation cycle, we gave the students survey covering ten questions. It questioned about their frequent habit of watching videos given, the benefits of the videos, their effort to watch the videos.

From the observation and questionnaire given, we had some problems came up dealing with the implementation of the flipped classroom. First is most of the students do not really watch the videos given. Over 67% of the students did not put their effort to watch the videos given and they were not really trying to do it as their main job to do. The similar percentage or 65% described their frequency of watching the videos with rarely or some of the time response.

This very first factor then lead to another factor i.e. participation. Students with low motivation, neither really watched the videos nor read the book had passive participation during the classroom interaction. In this case, we assumed there was a positive correlation between the low frequency of watching videos and classroom participation.

These two major problems lead us to think how the video or flipped classroom benefits to the students. In the reflecting stage, we came to the idea of having extrinsic motivation, required them not only watch the videos but also observed the content of the videos. We tended to add the behavioristic theory by having stimulus-response concept to the next cycle i.e. pushing them to watch videos by giving observation sheet they had to turn in every week, and giving them punishment (bad score for not doing the assignment).

Cycle 2 Activity

The cycle 2 was done in the second mid-term i.e. right after mid term test weeks and started from April to June 2017, which took for about eight meetings of planning, acting, observing, and reflecting.

As it has been planned, the cycle 2 tried to solve the two major problems faced in the cycle 1. As the reflection stage of the cycle 1 suggested, we planned to give students weekly assignment of watching, observing, and answering questions on the observation sheet. On the basis, the observation sheet had three parts of video identity, video summary, and video mind-map.

This planning was then implemented in the acting stage. Since this assignment tended to affect their score, there was rapid change of their motivation, interest, and classroom participation. As it has been mentioned earlier that only 33% of the students did watching videos seriously in the cycle 1, the percentage went much higher with over than 50% watch the videos. As we observed, the implementation of behavioristic theory of stimulus (giving punishment) and response (students worked hard) ran pretty well. The students had good motivation and interest in watching the videos.

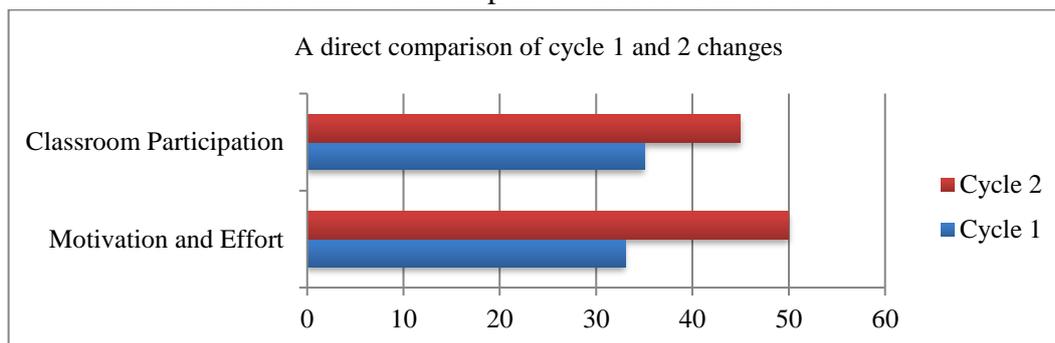
Since they observed the video provided carefully and had better understanding of the chapter, they were actively involved in the classroom discussion. They not only asked questions but also argued if they had different understanding about the chapter. Over 45% of

the students enjoyed the classroom discussion. After the 8 meetings over, we did the reflection to determine whether the research was categorized successful or not.

As we reflect, we might see that we were able to cope the problems and helped the students to comprehend the learning materials, which might conclude that flipped classroom was successful implemented.

Discussion

On the basis, this parts discusses and compares the result of cycle 1 and cycle 2. As it has been mentioned earlier that, there was a quick change of the students behavior and attitude toward the course. A clear depiction is described below:



It is clearly seen that the change of the students' behavior significantly improved right after having the behavioristic theory. It means the external motivation factor had the biggest portion in claiming the success of flipped classroom. It means that once the rules of stimulus-response were not longer involved, they might be back to the old habit of having low motivation for the class. Having the extrinsic motivation is necessary but it leads to a new problem on how to grow and stimulate the students' intrinsic motivation without being pushover with the scoring system.

A new homework for two of us is that we had to let the students to watch whatever the videos and do not ask the different group to be responsible to the videos as long as the videos are related to the topic. So, it leads the students to have varied knowledge about the topics. Thus, it means that it leads further investigation on solving the problems.

Conclusion

Based on the aforementioned findings and discussion, we draw some conclusion that flipped classroom has changed the students' behavior and attitude towards the TEFL course. It helps us to cope these problems and helped the students to comprehend the materials wells. There is a significant change of the students' behavior and attitude dealing with the TEFL course. It means that flipped classroom is successfully implemented.

This research suggests that that we had to let the students to watch whatever the videos as long as they are related to the assigned chapters. It may have positive effect in which the students may have various information or comprehension on the similar chapters. Another big work to do is to stimulate students' internal motivation to love doing such video observation project without having external stimulus from others. Last but not least, we

suggest that we need further investigation on how to stimulate them well.

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