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Overcoming Barriers to the Implementation of OER in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) through Using Flipped Learning for Teacher Development Sessions

Student Dissertation

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SAT: Overcoming Barriers to the Implementation of OER in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) through Using Flipped Learning for Teacher Development Sessions (Castle)

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[Steve Castle](#)

28 December 2014

Abstract

Creators of content for open educational resources (OER) often become mired in the fog of their design. They may deem themselves innovative and consider all manner of inclusion. However, a vital component is often overlooked, the effect of the resource on the end-user. Designs often imposed from a top-down point of view can stall at the point of implementation. Experience shows difficulties generally arise in three categories:

- Resentment from lack of consultation with end-users.
- (Assumed) Aversion, i.e. any new process or change to way of working creates a heavier workload (when in truth, it is often the opposite).
- Lack of faith due to the introduction of previous technological innovations not being as effective as originally planned. End-users discover ways to circumvent procedures to suit their requirements, possibly an innovation in itself.

A way of overcoming this situation is by involving end-users from the inception of the OER, using them as consultants, eliciting their critical analysis and advice on inclusion and how they would best use the end-product. This process indicates any potential difficulties and gives the opportunity to rethink the design.

OERs can be useful in an English as a foreign language (EFL) context and the artefact (a conference paper) is a case study in using a specific form of OER relating to the methodology of flipped learning. Flipped learning is part of a project to increase technology enhanced language learning (TELL) within the EFL environment. To overcome the initial resistance to a new process and to increase awareness of OERs a number of teacher development sessions are being delivered using this method.

A number of different sources have been drawn on including past academic papers , podcasts

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and videos relating to flipped learning, (the Khan academy for example) together with comments from colleagues online and within the EFL environment.

Due to the small number of staff involved in this project, data was collected in the form of formal/informal interviews (some interviews formed part of an appraisal process and the teachers' reflections on their perceived need (or not) for a personal development plan (PDP) in the particular stage of their career. Fortunately a majority of staff saw this as assisting their development, the minority had rather fixed attitudes and enforcing the policy would encourage the resentment effect. As Janssen et al (2013) comment, citing Fullan (2001) and also Maurer (2002) that 'implementing a new policy or approach does not automatically mean that teachers act in the same way as management intended'

The case study will look at the steps from innovation to implementation, discussing the advantages and disadvantages of the resources mentioned, where any drawbacks might occur, together with examining whether utilising end-users through the whole process is beneficial in whole or in part.

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[M.M](#)

7:59pm 13 January 2015 [Permalink](#)

Hi Steve.

I am incredibly interested in this. We currently have no coherent strategy for using the 'flipped classroom' and I would love to take some of your ideas to our SLT to run a cohesive pilot study. Knowing the barriers first would ideally be the best way to start! Teacher development is also my topic in a way so that will be very interesting. Thanks for this!



[Steve Castle](#)

7:53am 14 January 2015 [Permalink](#)

You're welcome Marese. Now the pressure's really on me to give a good presentation :) All

2015

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the best. Steve



[Stefanie Anyadi](#)

5:26pm 24 January 2015 [Permalink](#)

Hi Steve, the following blogpost might be useful: <http://blogs.ucl.ac.uk/ele/tag/the-flipped-classroom/>.



[Steve Castle](#)

3:10pm 25 January 2015 [Permalink](#)

Thank you Stefanie, that looks incredibly interesting. I shall have a read later.

Best Wishes

Steve



[Hugo Teixeira](#)

11:28am 28 January 2015 [Permalink](#)

Hi Steve. I very much look forward to your presentation. The difficulties you describe very much reflect my experience as an EFL teacher. I'm not familiar with your context, but I wonder if you will address culturally-biased learning and teaching preferences. As I will soon be teaching a workshop for local EFL teachers, I will certainly be taking notes.



[Steve Castle](#)

2:33pm 28 January 2015 [Permalink](#)

Uh-oh pressure is on me now Hugo. Teaching preferences yes and probably cultural as some nationalities are very fixed in the way they learn (I quoted a paper regarding that in a TMA, can't remember who at the moment). All the best Steve



[Hugo Teixeira](#)

3:39am 30 January 2015 [Permalink](#)

Great. Looking forward to it.



[Véronique Massé Du Bois](#)

10:25am 1 February 2015 [Permalink](#)

Hi Steve, sounds very interesting and right up my alley! your project is on EFL/ESL but could be applied to any foreign language teaching. I am very interesting in hearing how you overcome resistance and increase awareness. My project will look at similar aspects but for French teachers.



[Steve Castle](#)

7:56am 2 February 2015 [Permalink](#)

Hi Veronique, I agree. I often use techniques from other language teaching and adapt it for EFL and vice-versa. Increasing awareness is the easy bit. Overcoming resistance is a challenge, but I may have identified ways... Best Wishes Steve



[Dave Martin](#)

11:57am 2 February 2015 [Permalink](#)

One thing that interests me about barriers to implementation is the similarities across different contexts. In her work Samantha Marks has drawn upon the UK Government Digital Inclusion Strategy document from 2014. Whilst it is talking about access to the Internet I think the same four barriers (they call them challenges) apply - access, skill, motivation and trust. What do you think?



[Steve Castle](#)

2:13pm 2 February 2015 [Permalink](#)

Hi Dave, Yes, I can see your point. Especially in the motivation and trust aspects. I have also today noted an access difficulty for one of my staff. I'm not so sure about the skill aspect in my context as I think the skill would come after the training. Best Wishes Steve



[Dave Martin](#)

6:08pm 2 February 2015 [Permalink](#)

Thanks for that Steve. With my Credit Union podcast training for volunteers I have found skill level the least difficult barrier to overcome as all they need to do is click to open a file and press play, pause and rewind. But then I might argue back that this is because I kept the skill level required as low as possible.



[Cara Saul](#)

12:10pm 7 February 2015 [Permalink](#)

Really logical link looking at OER and in 'flipped learning'. Will be a great way to start this years H818 Conference. Really looking forward to your presentation.



[Steve Castle](#)

7:12pm 8 February 2015 [Permalink](#)

Hi Cara,

I'm sure I've met you elsewhere in the OUniverse on another module. Unfortunately, I had unforeseen problems, so could not present, which is rather ironic as my theme was implementation.

Best Wishes

Steve



[Steve Castle](#)

7:18pm 8 February 2015 [Permalink](#)

There is a link, but there may be problems with the sound which is far beyond my understanding and I'm trying to find a way round it.

<http://www.slideshare.net/Pensivecat/h818-conference-slides-soundcheck>

Best Wishes

Steve



[Steve Castle](#)

4:48pm 15 February 2015 [Permalink](#)

Hello all,

Have had lots of technology problems in the past week. This is my transcript relating to the above show. Unfortunately audio still not available yet - although it is embedded somewhere on slide show...probably a job for CSI :)

Presentation Transcript

Slide 1 – Hello my name is Steve and I'd like to welcome you to my presentation for the OU H818 Conference 2015 – 'Overcoming the Barriers to Implementation through Using Flipped Learning Techniques in Teacher Development'.

Slide 2 – This is based on a case study I began in December 2014 and will continue until the end of February 2015. So at the moment it is still a work in progress. I work as a Director of Studies in an English as a foreign language school (or EFL as it is more commonly known). The study focuses on that sector of education.

In my experience there are three barriers to implementation.

Slide 3 - They are resentment, (assumed) aversion (my parenthesis) and lack of faith. Let's look at each barrier separately, starting with resentment. Jansen et al comment...

Slide 4 – 'Implementing a new policy or approach does not automatically mean that teachers act in the same way as management intended'.

I see this as when instructions for a new approach to methodology or technology are issued on a top-down basis rather than an initial discussion or collaboration with the end-users of the product. In my experience, instructions to use new systems often emanate from those with little or no pedagogical experience thus laying the 'building blocks of resentment'.

Slide 5 – (Assumed) Aversion is my term for staff, who seem resistant to any type of change. The laggards, whom Rogers refers to in 'Diffusion of Innovations'. The reluctance stems from a fear that any new system will mean a heavier workload, when quite often the

idea is to make procedures simpler and more effective for staff. Granted there may be a little more work at the outset, but the results should prove the effort worthwhile.

Slide 6 – Finally, there's 'lack of faith'. I find this occurs when a number of systems have been introduced, but without much consideration for the final stages of implementation and the effect on the end-users. End-users could assume that the latest change or introduction to systems is the management's latest fad and will fail or be as ineffective as many previous attempts have.

Let's take a look at overcoming these barriers.

Slide 7 – My suggestions are – to engage the end users, ask for their support and advice, request rather than instruct.

Slide 8 – All participants need to be involved and it should involve management empowering their staff to convey that implementation is to be a collaborative effort from the beginning. Some senior staff may be used to micro-management and have difficulty in 'letting go of the reins'.

Slide 9 - Do we climb round these barriers or break them down? I suggest climbing round them and then organise the dismantlement from inside (a collaborative) effort.

Slide 10 – Overcoming Resentment

The suggestions may be obvious, but there can be distractions with the constraints of implementing a system within a certain timeframe and budget. Key is not letting the resentment build in the first place. As stated, engage with staff/end-users at the outset. Sell the new system as a 'mutual action'.

Slide 11- Overcoming Aversion

Again, it is important to engage with the end user, but also to investigate and discover why such aversion exists. Discuss with the staff members concerned, show them the benefits, remedy the situation.

Slide 12 – Overcoming Lack of Faith

As before engage with end users, the need to prove this is different from previous actions is also important. Condition staff to recognise benefits and convert them to a 'new' way of working.

Next, we'll take a brief look at flipped learning. Baepler et al describe flipped learning as...

Slide 13 – Flipped Learning

'A learning design that upends the typical division of student work'.

On a basic level flipped learning takes the input sessions from lectures or lessons and empowers the students to take more responsibility for their own learning, leaving more time during the lecture/lesson periods for discussion and application of issues raised through the 'flipped' input.

Slide 14 - Eight teachers plus two administrative staff were involved in the case study. The two administrative staff did not have English as their first language.

Slide 15 - The case study involved observation of teachers who attended 'physical' teacher development (TD) sessions compared to teachers who used virtual (flipped learning) sessions. The teachers who attended physical TD were used as a 'control group'.

Slide 16 - Observations and Comments

It is still a little early to ascertain the efficacy of such methodology as although staff were pleased at being included at the outset, there were the usual dissenters. Staff who usually forgot to attend physical TD sessions were the same staff that forgot to use the OER.

With only 10 participants, I am wary of using small samples of data as a generalisation to prove a case.

Slide 17/Slide 18 – Comments and Findings/Conclusion

As discussed before, it is still a little early for any comments or findings I would feel comfortable with. Although I realise that this presentation has been top-heavy with the causes of the failures of implementation and a little more work needs to be completed regarding the flipped learning aspect.

Slide 19 - References

Baepler, P. Walker, J.D. and Driessen, M (2014), It's not about seat time: Blending, flipping, and efficiency in active learning classrooms. *Computers and Education* (78) 2014, pp 227-236

Janssen, S., Kreijns, K., Bastiaens, T.J., Stijnen, S, and Vermulen, M. (2013), Teachers' beliefs about using a professional development plan *International Journal of Training and Development* 17:4, pp 260-275

Rogers, E.M. (2003), Diffusion of Innovations (5th ed.), Free Press/Simon and Schuster, New York

Best Wishes

Steve

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