Reviewer’s report

Title: Flipping for Success: Evaluating the Effectiveness of a Novel Teaching Approach in a Graduate Level Setting

Version: 2 Date: 9 December 2014

Reviewer: Eveline Booij

Reviewer’s report:

Dear authors,

I find the manuscript a clear written piece. I was only mildly familiar with the flipping the classroom concept and for me the article made clear that the focus of flipping does not lie on the pre-class activities (as I thought) but on the choices teachers make for the in-class activities. Flipping the classroom asks a different attitude and mindset towards learning from both students and teachers. As a teacher, I recognized the discomfort and fear you describe in the discussion (line 312). I found this striking.

I have no minor or major revisions, only some thoughts and questions that you might find helpful, or can choose to ignore. I am aware that many of my issues are of no use in this stadium of your research, but that did not restrain me. You never know for sure what is valuable for someone else...

My feedback:

1. Did your 'traditional' pre-class activities differ much? Besides the video-lecture, the student preparation does not seem different form more traditional formats?

2. Why were the pre-class activities voluntary (line 117)? Isn't the student preparation a solid precondition for effective deeper learning in-class (see also line 289-293)? Did this stand in the way of success?

3. How were the instructors prepared for the flipping-experiment? It takes (new?) skills to facilitate deep learning in-class. I would have found it interesting to read about the instructor's effectiveness ratings. Did they experience success? And why (not)?

4. Based on what information were the instructors able to decide what topics were relevant for the short-lectures (line 131)? It might have been an option to ask the students to take the quiz as a pre-class activity. The instructor can then use the statistics of the learning analytics to see witch topics were difficult or ask the student to e-mail them their questions beforehand. This would also have given the student and instructor more active, valuable, in-class time for deep learning: the class then starts with the review of the quiz and, if necessary, a short lecture.

5. Line 107-150: it might help the reader when the structure of the flipped
classroom is also visualized in an illustration or table.


7. Table 2: The textbook preparation is missing here?

8. Line 227: add 'significantly' to higher. This is more comfortable for the reader.

9. Line 295 made me think: the overall effectiveness was rated high by students. Maybe they would have rated the traditional format even higher. There was no control group or data form previous courses?

10. Is the management of technology really the main challenge? The video is only a small part of the overall format you developed (line 107-150). Maybe the challenge can be found in how to empower teachers to really stimulate students in class, and create a safe learning environment without discomfort and fear?

11. What are your recommendations to other researchers on this topic? And the limitations of your study?

Kind regards,

Drs. Eveline Booij
Educational scientist
The Netherlands

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests.