

Students' perceptions toward the flipped learning technique in Omani colleges

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Abstract

The study examined how Omani university students responded to the flipped learning approach. Researchers employed a descriptive-analytical method and selected a sample of 100 BA students from the Department of Business and Management Studies at Gulf College using selective sampling. Questionnaires were distributed and then collected from the students. The findings indicated that students held a positive view of the flipped learning approach. The method was found to motivate students to study and allow them to learn at their own pace. Additionally, the flipped learning approach helped students take better notes and improved their understanding of the material. Based on these results, the researchers recommended implementing guidelines to encourage lecturers at Omani universities to adopt the flipped learning model. They suggested that by using this strategy, faculty members can motivate students to engage more effectively in their studies.

Keywords: Undergraduates, Attitudes, Flipped Learning Approach, Omani Universities

• INTRODUCTION

Technology has significantly transformed the educational system, both inside and outside the classroom (Adam and Nel, 2009). While technology is widely used by both teachers and students, the importance of the traditional classroom cannot be overlooked. A conventional classroom is one where students and teachers interact face-to-face, allowing for direct engagement (Raths, 2014). The flipped learning approach emerged in response to the rapid advancement of technology. Unlike traditional learning, where students typically listen to lectures in class and then do homework afterward, flipped learning reverses this process. In a traditional classroom, students listen to their teacher during class and complete assignments at home, which may include reading and watching academic videos. In contrast, the flipped learning method involves students first accessing course materials at home through electronic means, such as watching pre-recorded lessons online. They then attend class to practice what they have learned and to discuss it with their peers (Garcia-Vedrenne, A. E., Orland, C., Ballare, K. M., Shapiro, B., & Wayne, R. K. (2020)).

The flipped learning approach allows students to be better prepared before class and increases their participation and interaction during class. It provides more opportunities for discussion and idea-sharing, making it a flexible and efficient learning method. By focusing on discussions rather than lectures during class time, educators and students can make better use of their time, potentially improving the quality of education (Guo, L. P. (2022)).

However, implementing the flipped learning approach throughout a semester can be challenging, as it requires both teachers and students to engage with each lesson outside of class. This method encourages students to build confidence in their learning environment, leading to increased participation in the learning process. By studying the material at home before class, students are better prepared to contribute to class discussions and learn at their own pace, fostering creativity and active engagement (Garcia-Vedrenne, A. E., Orland, C., Ballare, K. M., Shapiro, B., & Wayne, R. K. (2020)). The researchers aimed to explore the perceptions of Omani university students regarding the use of the flipped learning method.

- **Objective of the study**

To examine the attitudes of Omani university students toward the use of flipped learning techniques.

- **Question of the study**

What are the students' perceptions of the implementation of flipped learning techniques in Omani universities?

- **Limitation of the study**

The study has certain limitations: it specifically targets undergraduate students at Omani universities. Space limitations: The research was conducted at Gulf College. Time limitations: Data for this study were collected during the first semester of the 2022–2023 academic year. The focus of the study is on undergraduates' perceptions of using a flipped learning strategy in Omani colleges.

- **Significance of the study**

This study is significant due to the scarcity of research on flipped learning strategies in Omani universities. It serves as a valuable resource in several ways for the Omani Ministry of Scientific Research and Higher Education: The study provides essential data on the ICT skills of undergraduates. This information can help the ministry develop effective strategies and programs to enhance these skills among students. For Researchers: Those interested in conducting similar

studies can benefit from the findings and methodologies used in this research, as it offers a reliable tool that has been developed considering related studies For University Teachers in Iraq: This study provides credible data on undergraduate students' attitudes toward flipped learning. University instructors can use this information to enhance the quality of teaching and learning.

- **Theoretical literature**

Flipped learning promotes learner independence by encouraging students to take responsibility for their own learning and skill development. This approach changes the role of teachers from simply delivering information to facilitating knowledge acquisition (Jong, M. S. Y., Chen, G., Tam, V., Hue, M. T., & Chen, M. (2022)). The flipped learning strategy has many advantages because it combines various teaching methods, such as project-based and problem-based learning, as well as active and collaborative techniques. This fosters teamwork among students and helps them become better problem solvers (Prince, 2014).

The flipped approach transforms how students participate in learning, shifting them from passive listeners to active learners. It provides high-quality education, allowing students to learn at their own pace and reducing anxiety (Du et al., 2014). It also helps introverted students become more engaged and socially interactive in the learning process. The flipped method encourages students to recognize and appreciate diversity in educational settings and enables direct collaboration between students and teachers.

Additionally, it enhances students' teamwork skills (Du et al., 2014). However, there are challenges with the flipped method, such as limited internet access for some students, especially those in rural areas, and a lack of personal computers. This may force some students to use public computers in places like libraries. Furthermore, some students may lack the motivation to engage with this learning method, which could negatively impact its effectiveness. Assessing students using this approach can also be challenging (Du et al., 2014).

Herreid et al. (2014) noted that the flipped method allows students to make the most of their lecture time. According to Nederveld and Berge (2015), this method offers opportunities for skill development, particularly in software use, and provides ongoing support for students, making communication and collaboration easier. It allows students to share materials, such as journal articles and videos, and to explore and understand topics more deeply. It also offers opportunities for applying knowledge in practice (Nederveld and Berge, 2015).

It provides students with opportunities to practice essential skills related to their major and deepens their understanding of the subject matter. It helps them choose the appropriate strategies for solving problems and identify any gaps in their knowledge (Hsia, L. H., Lin, Y. N., & Hwang, G. J. (2021)). The flipped learning method allows students to correct mistakes and clear up misunderstandings, making learning more engaging and enjoyable. According to Lag and Saele

(2019), this method enhances students' comprehension, satisfaction with their learning experiences, and performance on assessments. It also positively impacts students' learning experience scores and satisfaction with the course content (Lag and Saele, 2019).

- **Review of Empirical Researches**

Abaeian and Samadi (2016) explored the impact of the flipped classroom on the reading comprehension of Iranian EFL students. They took a sample of 100 female students, with 50 assigned to the experimental group and the other 50 to the control group. Data was collected using pre-and post-tests. The experimental group received instruction through the flipped classroom model. The study found that the flipped classroom significantly improved reading comprehension, regardless of the students' language proficiency.

In 2017, Karimi and Hamzavi conducted a study to assess the effectiveness of the flipped instructional model in enhancing reading comprehension and to gauge Iranian EFL students' attitudes toward this approach. Using both experimental and descriptive methods, they sampled 50 EFL students. They employed a pre-test and a questionnaire, finding that the flipped classroom significantly improved the students' reading comprehension. The students also preferred the flipped classroom over traditional methods and felt more confident in their learning abilities when using the flipped model (Karimi and Hamzavi, 2017).

Farrah and Qawasmeh (2018) examined the attitudes of Hebron University students toward language learning in a flipped classroom. They used a questionnaire with 150 students and conducted interviews with 10 participants. The results showed that students had positive attitudes toward the flipped classroom. The method also promoted self-directed learning, encouraged students to ask questions, and provided clarification on difficult topics. Additionally, it gave students more opportunities to interact with peers and more time for extracurricular activities. The interviews further revealed that the flipped classroom improved students' knowledge, communication skills, and teamwork abilities (Farrah and Qawasmeh, 2018).

- **Methodology**

The researchers decided to use a descriptive-analytical method, which is often employed to describe processes and objects, helping to clarify ideas (Lawless and Heymann, 1999). This method is commonly used in research across various fields, including psychology, education, and social sciences. The goal is to outline the characteristics of phenomena, focusing more on the "what" rather than the "why" questions. It aims to describe what has happened and its key features. Additionally, the researchers used a quantitative approach, which allowed them to gather information from participants and analyze it statistically (Nassaji, 2015).

- **Data Collection**

The essential data were gathered by the investigators utilizing questionnaire forms. By reading all of the pertinent texts, studies, and magazines, they gathered additional data.

- **Instrument**

The researchers designed a questionnaire based on relevant empirical and theoretical literature. They used a five-point Likert scale to measure responses. The questionnaire was provided to participants in Arabic. The first section of the questionnaire collected basic information about the participants, such as their gender and familiarity with information and communication technologies. The second section focused on gathering participants' opinions on using a flipped learning strategy in Omani universities. This section included 12 statements and was developed using insights from the works of Hamdan et al. (2013), Farrah and Qawasmeh (2018), Karimi & Hamzavi (2017), and Dusenbury & Olson (2019).

Samples

100 students made up the intentional group that the researchers chose. The students who were chosen are all Bachelor students. They are chosen from Gulf College in Baghdad, Iraq. The survey forms are handed out. The papers were all located. The collected data are shown in the table below.

Table 1. Data about the respondents

Question	Category	Frequency
How do you rate your ICT proficiency?	Excellent	5.15
	very good	17
	Good	46.39
	Fair	17.26
Gender	Poor	14.17
	Female	67.26
	Male	32.73

N=100

Based on the information provided, 67.2% of the participants are female, while 32.7% are male. Among the selected students, 46.6% demonstrate strong ICT proficiency, 17.2% have advanced ICT skills, and 14.1% show lower ICT proficiency. These figures indicate a need for Omani universities to offer more training in ICT skills. Such training programs will help students keep up with the latest ICT developments and enable them to enhance their learning using online resources.

• **Statistical Evaluation and Standards**

The researchers utilized the SPSS programme to evaluate the data they had gathered. They conducted data analyses using descriptive statistical techniques. Standard deviations, percentages, and frequencies, and averages are a few examples of these techniques. They are regarded as quantitative statistical techniques as well. They determined each mean level as well.

The following criteria are used to classify means.

Table 2. The criteria adopted for having the means classified

Range	Level	Attitude
2.33 or less	Low	Negative
2.34-3.66	Moderate	Neutral
3.67 or more	High	Positive

Table 3 presents information about the five-point Likert scale

Table 3. The categories and scores of the five-point Likert scale

Category	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
The score it represents	5	4	3	2	1

10. Discussion and Results What are the undergraduates’ attitudes towards adopting a flipped learning approach in Omani universities?

Table 4. The undergraduates’ attitudes toward adopting a flipped learning approach in Omani universities

No.	Statement	Mean	Std.	Attitude	Level
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1	Adopting a flipped learning strategy enhances how lecturers manage their time during lectures.	2.31	0.73	Negative	Low
2	gives students the option to learn at a speed that suits their needs.	4.96	0.21	Positive	High
3	encourages learning among students	4.78	0.15	Positive	High
4	supports the taking of notes procedure	4.85	0.64	Positive	High
5.	increases students' comprehension of information	4.71	0.96	Positive	High
6.	increases students' satisfaction with the learning process	4.43	0.73	Positive	High
7.	raises students' extent of engagement in the teaching-learning process inside the classroom.	4.64	0.28	Positive	High
8.	increases students' reading comprehension	4.76	0.44	Positive	High
9.	increases students' language proficiency level.	4.81	0.21	Positive	High
10.	enhances the communication abilities of learners	2.19	0.57	Negative	Low
11.	boosts knowledge among students	4.65	0.31	Positive	High
12.	permits instructors to cover the whole course syllabus throughout the semester	2.24	0.46	Negative	Low
	Total	4.11	0.47	Positive	High

Table (4) presented an overview of the undergraduates' views on using a flipped learning strategy in Omani colleges are favorable, with a mean score of 4.11 overall.

The study found that a flipped learning strategy offers several benefits, including allowing students to learn at their own pace, increasing motivation, making note-taking easier, and enhancing students' knowledge, understanding, and language skills. It also boosts student satisfaction and participation in class. These findings align with prior research by Gustian, K., Aridah, A., & Rusmawaty, D. (2023). However, the study noted some limitations, such as the flipped method's lack of impact on improving faculty time management during lectures and communication skills among students. Additionally, it may hinder the ability to cover the entire syllabus in one semester, contradicting some earlier studies

like those by Hamdan et al. (2013). The differences in results could be attributed to varying levels of faculty training and the extent of in-person interaction in flipped classrooms

• **CONCLUSION**

Several conclusions were drawn from the data analysis. For instance, the findings reveal that undergraduates in Omani colleges have positive attitudes toward using a flipped learning approach. This method allows students to learn at their own pace, motivates them to engage with the material, and makes note-taking easier. It also enhances students' knowledge and understanding, increases their participation in classroom activities, and improves their overall satisfaction with the learning experience. Additionally, the flipped learning strategy boosts students' language skills and reading comprehension, further increasing their knowledge. However, the strategy does not improve how lecturers manage their time during lectures, nor does it enhance students' communication skills.

• **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Future studies should consider the following recommendations:

- Provide support to academic staff at both public and private universities in Oman to encourage the use of a flipped classroom model.
- Organize workshops for academic staff at Omani universities to highlight the benefits of implementing a flipped teaching method.
- Develop guidelines to motivate academics at Omani universities to adopt the flipped classroom approach.
- Conduct further research on the opinions of Omani university students regarding different teaching methods to improve the quality of education in Omani colleges and universities.

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