

# At ease, soldier! Stop 'smashing it out' in a week; extending the Functional Skills English classroom in Army Apprenticeships

## Introduction

Access to military personnel for regular Functional Skills lessons across the duration of the apprenticeship programme is often difficult to maintain due to the many and varied demands on soldiers' time. This research considers the effect of extending the classroom, using a flipped approach, as a way of reducing the desire to 'smash' success out in restrictive week-long classroom-based sessions.

### Flipped Learning

*A pedagogical approach in which content is viewed before the session and then lesson time is spent applying the skills and knowledge*



## Key Literature

Bergmann, Jonathan, and Aaron Sams. *Flip Your Classroom : Reach Every Student in Every Class Every Day*, International Society for Tech in Ed., 2007.

Cockrum, Troy. *Flipping your English class to reach all learners: strategies and lesson plans*, Routledge, 2013

Jeffrey Mehring, and Adrian Leis. *Innovations in Flipping the Language Classroom : Theories and Practices*, Springer Singapore Pte. Limited, 2017

## Methodology

The research for this project is with a cohort of army apprentices preparing for Functional Skills English exams. The learners are representative of the culturally diverse environment in that many do not use English as their first language.

Is English your first language?



## Stages of research:

1. Survey learners & colleagues and interview military line manager
2. Deliver sessions using the flipped approach
3. Issue questionnaire after each learning session
4. Online feedback from learners on completion of the sessions
5. Review exam results and lesson observation notes

## Recommendations

- The flipped approach works well with motivated learners but the scope of the study did not allow for an analysis on the effect on less motivated learners. Further research recommended.
- Flipped content should be mobile-friendly as most learners do not have laptops. This will also enhance accessibility for military personnel in remote locations.
- Flipped content should be limited to fewer than 10 minutes where possible.
- Flipped content should be accompanied by an activity to complete and submit to demonstrate engagement.

Research carried out by Louise Sheppard for the ETF Practitioner Research Programme

## Key Findings

In surveys carried out after each classroom session 100% of learners liked having the information prior to the lesson:

- 38% said this was because it gave them time to go through the content at their own pace
- 38% said this was because they were able to review the resource as many times as they liked
- 24% said this was because it motivated them to do some more research on the topic

