

OUTSTANDING TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT

**FINAL REPORT ON THE OTLA PHASE 7 (ENGLISH) PROJECT –
FLIPPED LEARNING
Leicester College**

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For further information regarding the OTLA Phase 7 (English) programme and this project go to <https://ccpathways.co.uk/practitioner-research/otla-7/>.

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Final report - Flipped Learning

Leicester College

This project aimed to embrace flipped learning in GCSE English to make our students more independent learners and to improve the learning experience.

Summary

Leicester College is a Post-16 College with three large campuses based in the centre of Leicester. Due to the circumstances of COVID-19, we had to rapidly rethink the way we delivered GCSE English Language. We were only going to see the students for one lesson a week and they would work remotely another lesson. Prior to the pandemic, we had seen students for two 1.75-hour sessions. Due to social distancing, we were now only able to have 12 students per class. We wanted to use a flipped learning model to encourage learners to come to the session prepared in order to make the face-to-face sessions as effective as possible. We also wanted to achieve several other objectives:

- increase students' motivation by completing self-led tasks
- help students to gain confidence in their skills
- prepare the students better for their GCSE exams
- develop other skills that could be transferred to support other subjects and the skills needed for the workplace.

By the term "flipped learning" we refer to learning completed prior to the class to prepare for material covered in the session.

Rationale

The largest challenge we have with mandated GCSE resit students is their lack of involvement in the learning process; they tend to be passive learners. Coming from school, a typical grade 3 learner has been very much 'spoon-fed' and they have often lost faith in their own skills. Resit students often display signs of disengagement and lack motivation, often with no interest in pursuing the subject. They frequently feel entrenched in failure. Our job is to give them hope, self-belief and encourage them to engage, whilst taking the next step of assuming responsibility for their own learning.

Clear communication is the key to success with flipped learning and all tasks must intricately link to direct teaching activities, so students can see the benefit in completing the tasks.

We also wanted to match the pedagogy to the technology and new environment that we found ourselves operating in. We aimed to find an approach that would be effective if we were teaching remotely; seeing students in class; or using a blended model. Due to the uncertainty of working during a pandemic, we needed a flexible model that could be adapted quickly and effectively during these challenging times.

Approach

We planned to use a single digital platform which would also be used within their vocational studies. This would mean students were confident in knowing where to find material, how to engage in classroom tasks and upload collaborative tasks and assignments and generally, communicate electronically. By using the Microsoft Teams' package, we set up a Class Notebook for each class, so it had its own collaboration area and assignments. We also used Teams Assessments (linked to Microsoft Forms) to check that flipped learning had been completed.

To start *Phase One*, we surveyed a small sample of students to establish their attitude to flipped learning (see Appendix 2 for the survey and appendix 3 for results). We then asked the students to read a text prior to each reading lesson that was sent as an assignment in Teams. An example of the text can be seen in appendix 4. They would then answer a short MS Forms-based quiz which would check their understanding. Appendix 5 shows the type of questions that were used. By doing this, all students would be starting the class at the same point, whilst students who found reading more challenging could read the text as many times as they liked, to gain a clearer understanding. The students had the opportunity to research unknown vocabulary and for more difficult 19th century texts, could gain an understanding of the context. They also had total control over the pace of the flipped learning work.

In *Phase Two*, the project was expanded to include the writing lesson. We sent learners an assignment in Teams with a short video to watch relating to the upcoming writing lesson and, again there was a short MS Forms-based quiz to confirm understanding. Appendix 6 shows an example of this. We then completed a second survey referring to both reading and writing flipped learning. See Appendix 7 for questions and Appendix 8 for results. Adaptations were then made, or will be made, based on these results.

Research showed that schools that had been successful with delivering flipped learning had good parental support, (Moore, 2014). We decided to address this, and help parents understand what we were trying to achieve from the outset. Therefore, we sent out a letter early in Phase 1, informing parents that the student was required to read the text before each class in order to be prepared for the lesson.

Professional learning: Evidence of changes in teaching, learning and assessment practices

We have changed our delivery model for 2021-21 based on the success of this project. We have realised that smaller groups are the only way to achieve the results that we desire. By embedding flipped learning into our model, we can keep the class sizes at the desired number of 12, for face-to-face sessions.

At the start of the year, we had three teachers who were following the flipped model. As the year progressed all of the team embraced the model with ten teachers across three sites working hard to help students adapt to this this style of learning. We have

also supported the Functional Skills team to see how we can help them switch to using flipped learning next academic year.

The model has increased the interaction between students and teaching staff. Students feel comfortable messaging the teacher via Teams if they have questions, so there is far more communication and support being given between classes.

Teachers have reported a much greater level of student confidence, earlier on in the academic year, as the students tackle the texts and have become more engaged learners.

The obvious barrier was that some students would not read the text and not engage with the process. These students would then be asked to read it quickly at the start of the lesson, while the teacher moved ahead with the cohort that had read it, preferably with something more interesting such as a YouTube clip or a Kahoot quiz which helped to conclude that completing the pre-reading task had its benefits.

Evidence of improved collaboration and changes in organisational practices

In terms of equality and diversity, the opportunity to see the text before the class is particularly beneficial for students with dyslexia or other support needs. Next year, we are planning to support this further by making the recording of the text available at the start of the year, while learners find their feet and settle.

By developing a routine where we were asking students to use the same skills and essentially complete the same task each week, but with a different text, we helped to build students' confidence. They understood what to do and how it then helped them in class.

Constantly sharing our outcomes as a team, adapting what we were doing and supporting each other with more challenging classes meant that we were able to work together to tackle any potential issues.

Microsoft Teams has proved an excellent platform, with useful upgrades being released regularly. We have had learners working on a variety of devices so the advantage of Teams being available as an app, has enabled nearly all students to engage. The chat facility has proved invaluable in establishing a relationship based on trust.

Class Notebook has worked well for most, but some students have not got the technology to access this so we have adapted, using Teams' messaging or email instead to accept remotely completed work. We have plans to extend the use of Class Notebook in the next academic year, as this year we feel that we have not used it to its full potential because staff have had to deal with so many other changes during a pandemic.

We completed a survey of the GCSE English teaching team to understand how they found flipped learning, the positives and the negatives and to share any challenges they had encountered. See Appendix 9.

We had support from Gateshead College, who had successfully used flipped learning in their maths department. Their passion and belief in this model helped some of our more cynical staff to start to see that this was a viable option. We had a training session with Gateshead, where our staff had time to discuss their concerns and ask questions of teachers who had made this work.

Evidence of improvement in learners' achievements, retention and progression

Some students did struggle to engage. It is hard to say if this was due to the sections of remote teaching and the impact of a pandemic in general, or if this was because of the flipped learning. More detail of our individual case studies can be found in Appendix 10 - Case Studies.

The students that we followed as case studies have shown improvement.

Overall, teachers have found flipped learning invaluable in reducing student anxiety levels, preparing students for what they will learn in class and improving their independence, thus preparing them for work. It has also helped in terms of behaviour, as anxiety is often expressed as poor behaviour. The newer writing quizzes included answers so that students know where they went wrong, and this is something that we aim to do for the reading quizzes next year.

The reduction in anxiety levels was an unintended bonus of the project. Being in a pandemic meant that an even higher number of students than normal were stating to their vocational department that they were experiencing anxiety. The quotations below are typical responses from learners who struggle with anxiety:

'I feel less anxious because I understand what will come into the lesson and to not have to worry about it.'

'I feel less anxious in lesson if I do pre-learning.'

Other positive comments made by students were:

'Yes. 100%. It's made me a much better writer and reader.'

'Yes. I felt I have improved on my reading and writing skills compared to beginning of this year.'

'Yes. because I don't like getting given a text and then getting questions asked face to face because it puts me on the spot and I never used to do it before so since I started doing it it's made me feel like I understand the work/writing.'

Most teachers confirm that in the session where the students have completed the flipped learning then more progress is made in class and students frequently complete the planned work.

Learning from this project

What went well:

- Seeing the students face-to-face until Christmas, allowed the teacher to build a relationship with them so when the lockdown was imposed, we understood the students and how to get the best out of them. This really worked in our favour when we wanted them to continue coming to class prepared.
- Less confident students could access the work as many times as they wanted prior to the session.
- Students gained in confidence and came to lessons better prepared. This confidence also started much earlier in the year than usual.
- Students developed transferable skills for the future.
- Surprisingly, in some classes, attendance was better than in previous years.

Even better if:

- If you start all groups with the flipped learning approach from the beginning of the academic year, it is easier to get the students in the habit and embed it in. We started some groups and then added others, as we could see results. Next year it will be part of our culture from the first day we meet the students. All our materials will be adapted to incorporate the flipped approach.
- All teachers need to be firm from the outset with students who do not complete the work prior to class. The teachers who took a firm line got the students responding well. We need to work on supporting teachers to take this firm line. Next year, staff will be competent and confident with the digital platform and flipped learning, which should positively impact the flipped learning process.
- The main reasons we found for non-engagement were that students could not get past seeing this as 'homework' so did not want to do it. They are completing full-time courses in addition to English (and sometimes maths) and are therefore under pressure from their curriculum area. Many do not have the time management skills to manage their studies: or do not see the value of achieving a GCSE. We believe all of these can be addressed by working on their mind-set and supporting students with overcoming these issues.

References

Moore, L. (2014) *Flipped learning: Improving Attainment and Progress through Homework*, Online: <https://www.ocr.org.uk/Images/232863-flipped-learning-toolkit.pdf> (Accessed: September 2020)

Hertz, M.B (2015) *The flipped Classroom Pro and Con*, Online: <https://www.edutopia.org/blog/flipped-classroom-pro-and-con-mary-beth-hertz> (Accessed: September 2020)

Appendix 1 – The project team

| Project Role | Name | Job Role |
|---------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------|
| Project Lead | Michelle Bilby | Programme Area Manager |
| Deputy Lead | Caroline Weedon | Programme Lead |
| Project team | Jemini Parmar | Lecturer |
| | Sam Wheatley | Lecturer |
| | Sepide Edwards | Lecturer |
| | Cathy Bright | Lecturer |
| | Tracey Wigston | Lecturer |
| | Rehana Pirmahomed | Lecturer |
| | Maria Leah | Lecturer |
| | Beth Kemp | Lecturer |
| Project Mentor | Dianne Robinson (ccConsultancy) | |
| Research Group Lead | Bob Read (ccConsultancy) | |

Appendix 2 - Survey of feelings about the new way of working - the 'new normal'

This short survey is to establish from the start, how you feel about resitting your English GCSE and about having to work remotely completing work independently.

1. How do you feel about resitting your English GCSE again? Use a scale of 1-5 where 1 = Angry or upset 3 = "Meh" or bored, 5 = It's ok, I'll work.

1 2 3 4 5

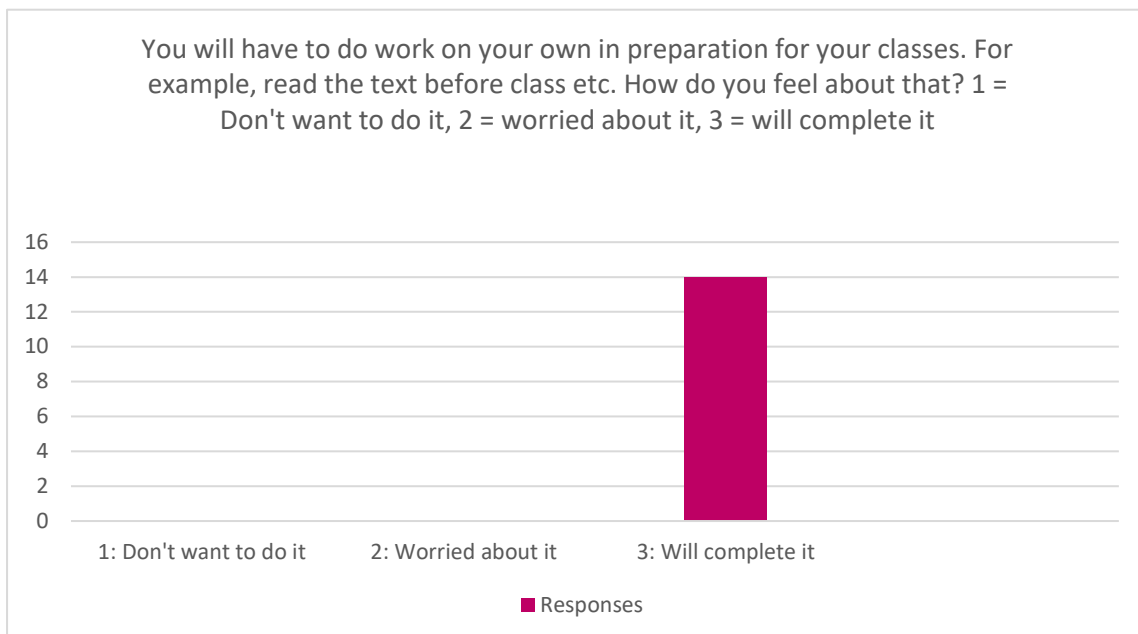
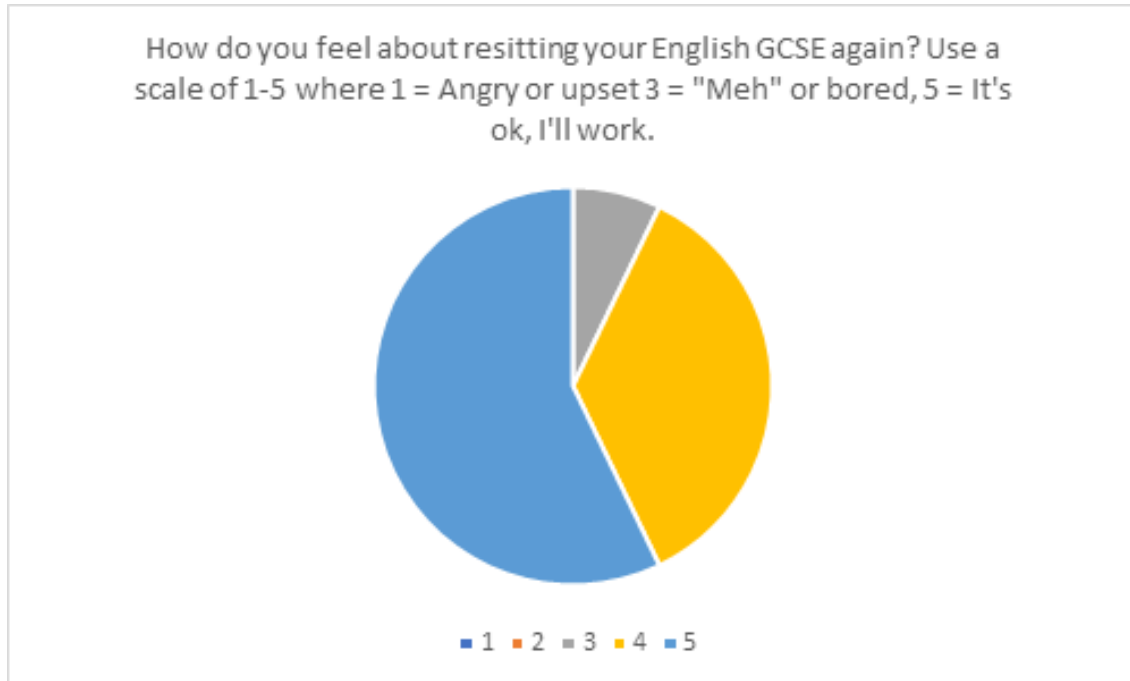
2. You will have to do work on your own in preparation for your classes. For example, read the text before class etc. How do you feel about that? 1 = Don't want to do it, 2 = worried about it, 3 = That's fine.

1 2 3

3. Do you think that preparing ahead of time for your class will help you to learn more once you are in class?

Yes No Maybe

Appendix 3 – Answers to the initial survey of students' attitude to flipped learning



Do you think that preparing ahead of time for your class will help you to learn more once you are in class?



■ Yes ■ Maybe ■ No

Appendix 4 - Diary of a Nobody - GCSE in English APC (2020/21)

APRIL 25.– In consequence of Brickwell telling me his wife was working wonders with the new Pinkford's enamel paint, I determined to try it. I bought two tins of red on my way home. I hastened through tea, went into the garden and painted some flower-pots. I called out Carrie, who said: "You've always got some new-fangled craze," but she was obliged to admit that the flower-pots looked remarkably well. Went upstairs into the servant's bedroom and painted her washstand, towel-horse, and chest of drawers. To my mind it was an extraordinary improvement, but as an example of the ignorance of the lower classes in the matter of taste, our servant, Sarah, on seeing them, evinced no sign of pleasure, but merely said "she thought they looked very well as they was before."

APRIL 26.– Got some more red enamel paint (red, to my mind, being the best colour) and painted the coal-scuttle, and the backs of our Shakespeare, the binding of which had almost worn out.

APRIL 27.– Painted the bath red, and was delighted with the result. Sorry to say Carrie was not, in fact we had a few words about it. She said I ought to have consulted her, and she had never heard of such a thing as a bath being painted red. I replied: "It's merely a matter of taste." Fortunately, further argument on the subject was stopped by a voice saying, "May I come in?" It was only Cummings, who said, "Your maid opened the door, and asked me to excuse her showing me in, as she was wringing out some socks." I was delighted to see him, and suggested we should have a game of whist with a dummy, and by way of merriment said: "You can be the dummy." Cummings (I thought rather ill-naturedly) replied: "Funny as usual." He said he couldn't stop, he only called to leave me the Bicycle News, as he had done with it. Another ring at the bell; it was Gowing, who said he "must apologise for coming so often, and that one of these days we must come round to him." I said: "A very extraordinary thing has struck me." "Something funny, as usual," said Cummings. "Yes," I replied; "I think even you will say so this time. It's concerning you both; for doesn't it seem odd that Gowing's always coming and Cummings' always going?" Carrie, who had evidently quite forgotten about the bath, went into fits of laughter, and as for myself, I fairly doubled up in my chair, till it cracked beneath me. I think this was one of the best jokes I have ever made. Then imagine my astonishment on perceiving both Cummings and Gowing perfectly silent, and without a smile on their faces. After rather an unpleasant pause, Cummings, who had opened a cigar-case, closed it up again and said: "Yes – I think, after that, I shall be going, and I am sorry I fail to see the fun of your jokes." Gowing said he didn't mind a joke when it wasn't rude, but a pun on a name, to his thinking, was certainly a little wanting in good taste. Cummings followed it up by saying, if it had been said by anyone else but myself, he shouldn't have entered the house again. This rather unpleasantly terminated what might have been a cheerful evening. However, it was as well they went, for the charwoman had finished up the remains of the cold pork.

Appendix 5 - Forms quiz

1. What effect does the writer create with the following phrase, "I fairly doubled in my chair"? They intend to create a sense of...

(1 Point)

repulsion humour disapproval

2. What does Pooter's wife Carrie think of her husband's 'new fangled craze'?

(1 Point)

- a) She is impressed at first, then cross.
- b) She is excited.
- c) She doesn't care.

3. What is the meaning of the word 'evinced'?

(1 Point)

- a) Showed, displayed
- b) Hide away
- c) Conceal

4. What was the mood of the writer?

(1 Point)

- a) Sad
- b) Happy
- c) Argumentative

5. Did Pooter's friends, Cummings and Gowing, find his humour endearing?

(1 Point)

- a) Yes
- b) No
- c) Maybe

6. How many household items did Pooter paint?

(1 Point)

- a) 6
- b) 7
- c) 8

7. What is the definition of a pun?

(1 Point)

- a) A joke exploiting different meanings of a word.
- b) Words that rhyme.
- c) A word with a sarcastic tone.

8. What is the meaning of the word, 'perceiving'?

(1 Point)

- a) To like something.
- b) To hate something.
- c) Become aware or conscious of (something).

9. What colour was Pooter's preferred colour of paint?

(1 Point)

- a) Blue
- b) Green
- c) Red

Appendix 6 - Using Dialogue in Imaginative Writing GCSE in English APC (2020/21)

Dialogue, in small amounts, can be really useful in your stories. For instance, they can help in: making a character interesting; telling us about their backstory; moving the story along; introducing a problem; or showing the resolution to a problem. However, don't overdo the dialogue and don't have too many characters talking - or it gets confusing and ...dull. Watch this video on how to punctuate dialogue effectively and answer the quiz. Note how you CAN use said in your writing but it's also good to put some feeling into the speech as well using words like 'muttered', 'exclaimed' etc. The most common mistake that people make is to miss out the capital letter inside the speech mark - ALWAYS start their speech with a capital letter, even if it's halfway through your sentence. Like this: I yelled across to her, "Hey! Can I help?" WATCH THIS SHORT VIDEO NOW and then answer the quiz. Be careful. Some of the questions are about what I've written here! Then press submit:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dWSfn9oPnJg>

1. Dialogue written without the rules being followed is confusing:

(1 Point)

True False

2. If you overuse dialogue it can be:

(1 Point)

- a) dull and boring
- b) dull and interesting
- c) dull and confusing

3. You CAN use 'said' as a reporting word/tag, just use other words as well to show feeling:

(1 Point)

True False

4. You need a new paragraph for each new speaker:

(1 Point)

True False

5. Full stops to show the end of the speaker's words go inside the speech marks:

(1 Point)

True False

6. You put ? and ! outside the speech marks, if the content inside them is a question or an exclamation.

(1 Point)

True False

7. After you've written it, it's always a good idea to read it through the dialogue to check that it makes sense.

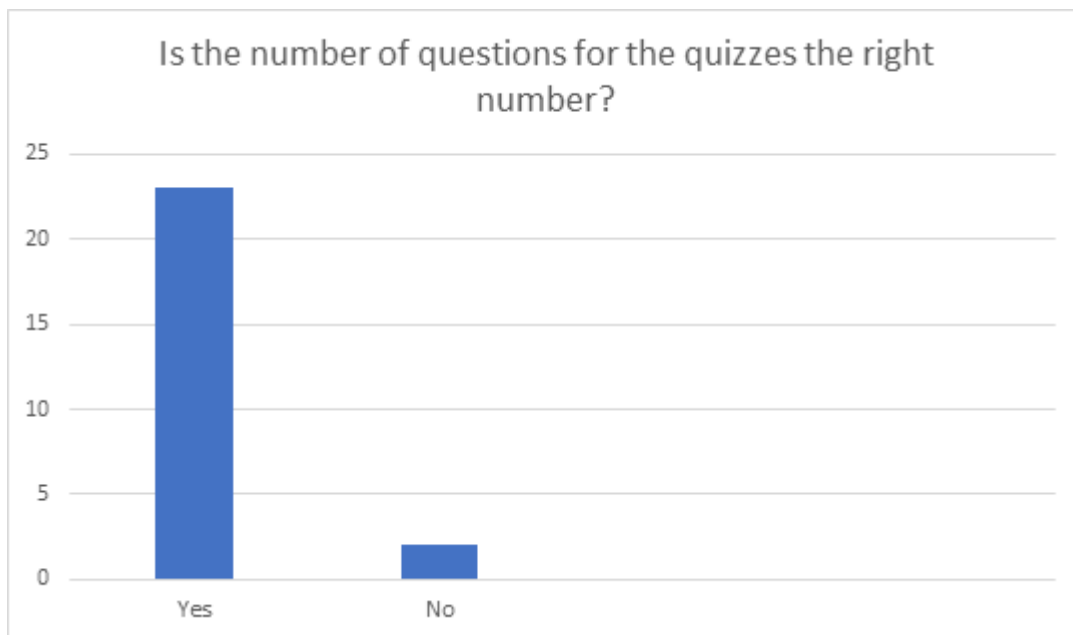
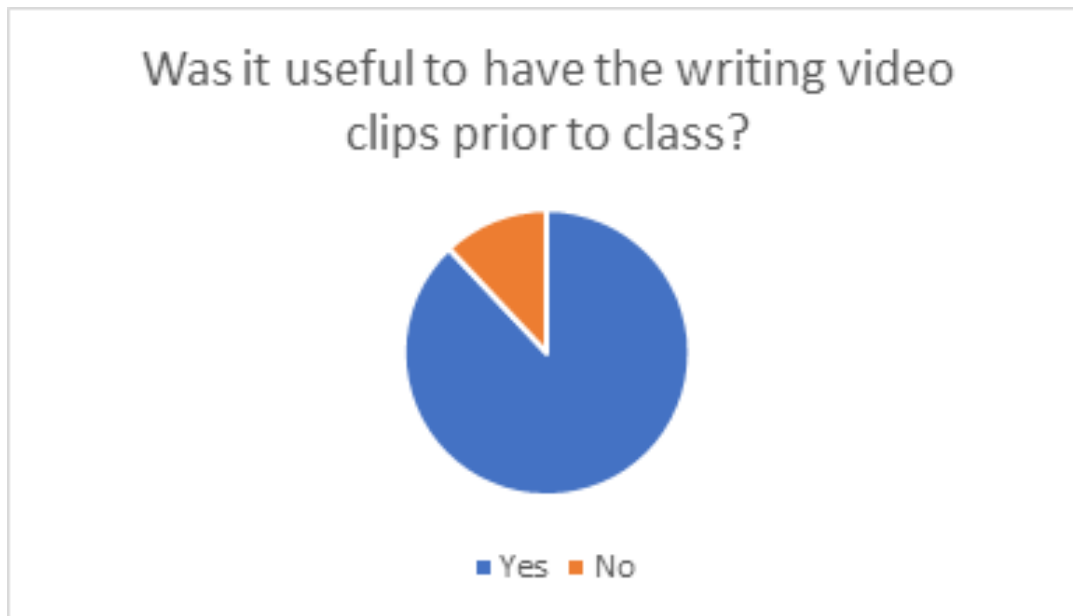
(1 Point)

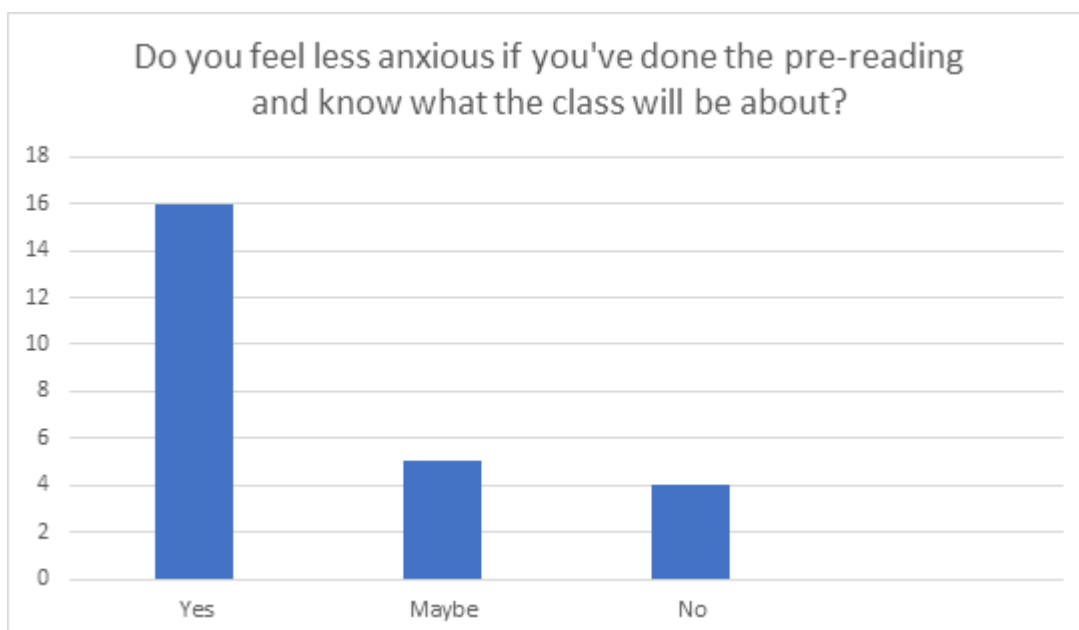
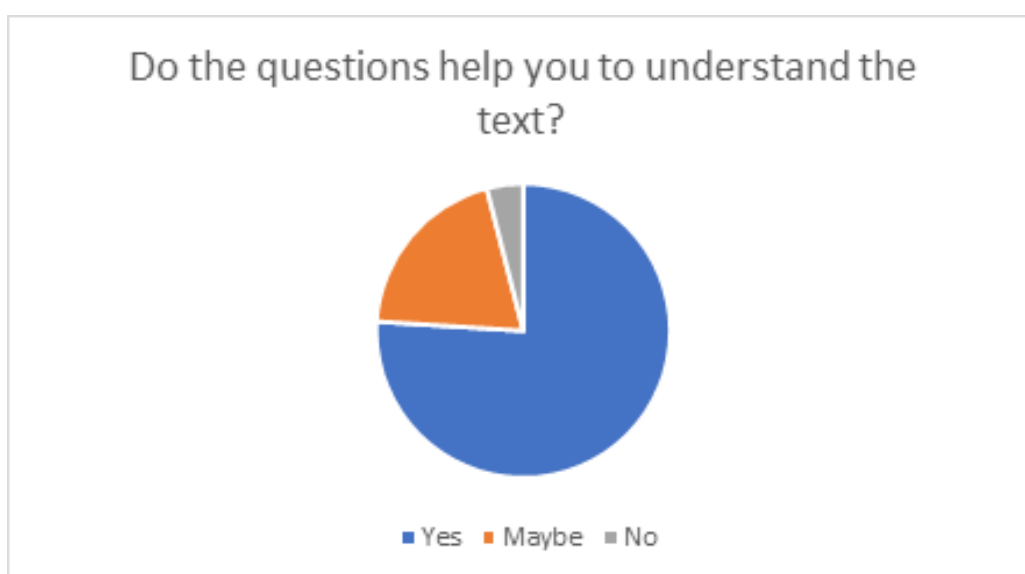
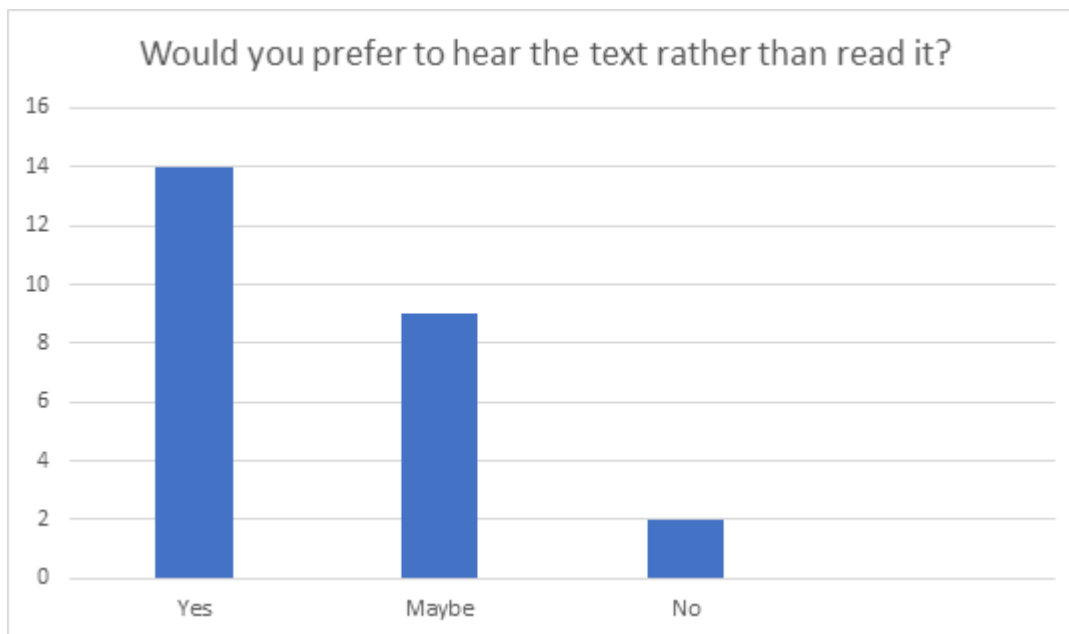
True False

Appendix 7 – Questions for the second survey

1. Was it useful to have the writing video clips prior to the class?
2. Is the number of questions for the quizzes the right number?
3. Would you prefer to hear the text rather than read it?
4. Do the questions help you to understand the text?
5. Do you feel less anxious if you have completed the pre-reading and know what the class will be about?

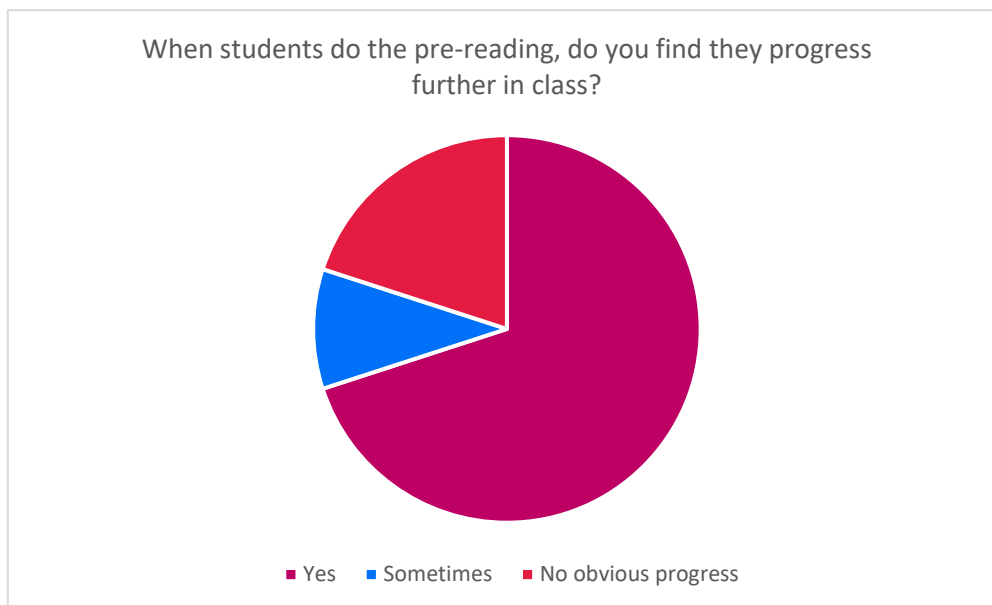
Appendix 8 - Second survey result





Appendix 9 – Results from the staff survey

1.



2. What is the biggest barrier to flipped learning?

A range of responses that included:

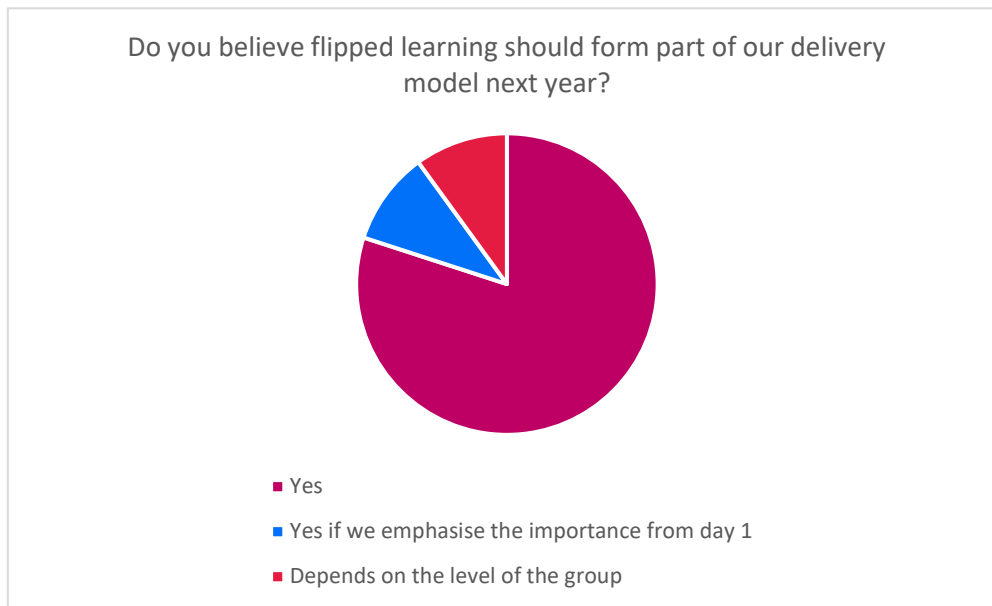
- Maturation
- Other coursework demands
- Access to WiFi
- Don't like doing homework
- Poor organisation skills
- Self-discipline

3. What is the biggest positive to flipped learning?

A range of responses that included:

- Gaining prior knowledge
- Improved reading skills
- Coping with unknown texts
- Comprehension is enhanced
- More confidence
- Answer directed questions quicker
- Get 'into' the lesson quicker
- The quiet ones find it reassuring
- They take responsibility for learning outside the class

4.



5. If we continue with flipped learning, what do we need to adapt?

A range of responses that included:

- Make students accountable
- Set a midweek reminder to prompt them
- Add it to class PPs to fully focus it as part of the lesson
- Embrace it fully
- More emphasis on it from day 1
- Incorporate reminders in the books
- Use forms to check understanding of work covered as well
- Interweave the reading and writing so the learner makes links between the two

6. Do you believe we can have more success next year by keeping group numbers at 12?

A range of responses that included:

- Absolutely – the biggest barrier is poor behaviour
- Yes, this way we can really teach
- Yes, this delivery model is more focused
- Yes, smaller classes allow us to know strengths and weaknesses quicker
- Yes, less time on crowd control, more on teaching
- Yes, smaller classes = more focused teaching time
- Yes, less behaviour issues

Additional comments:

Take the positives from COVID-19 and build on them.

Encouraging students to take responsibility is the way forward.

I love it. Sending reminders works; this needs to happen routinely next year.

The videos were more successful than the reading in my groups. These kids depend/rely on YouTube, not text.

The issue is enforcing flipped learning. As much as I love it, some students will not do it.

A great way of managing cognitive overload.

Appendix 10 – Case studies

The first two students were chosen within the first two weeks of term.

Student 1 - This learner is from Health and Social Care – Level 1. She was originally chosen because she was vocal and feisty. It was felt that to engage her co-operation would help the classroom environment and reduce the poor behaviour. This worked, and the class was not negatively impacted by her challenging behaviour. However, she did not engage in the flipped learning material much at all. Working outside of class was not something that she was willing to do and, sometimes, working inside class was also not on her agenda. In addition, she has struggled during the pandemic and her family situation is complex, with her needing to care for younger siblings at times. However, the process of being asked, and being treated as a young adult, has improved her overall attitude, behaviour and has positively impacted her retention. Her reading scores have jumped 2 grades from her diagnostic work, but she has remained at a band 3 in a recent mock. She recently asked to be invited into class virtually when she was unable to attend in person.

Student 2 - This construction learner did not cope well with repeating another year of English GCSE. At first, he was proud to be asked but he failed to engage in the process, although he said to me that it was ‘nothing personal’ and that I was ‘sound’. In fact, before Christmas, he left his vocational course as he had gained an apprenticeship.

The following two learners were added after a few weeks, as the first two students were not engaging with the process. They had been chosen at the start when the teacher was not familiar with the students. Student 3 changed group in October and student 4 was shy and poorly at the start of the year.

Student 3 – This student is studying a BTEC Level 1 Diploma in Business Administration and has been with the college for some years being 19. He has always completed work, both independently and in class, and any surveys. He has reported that he finds the video clips useful as they ‘visually help with understanding what’s happening’ and that pre-reading the texts help, as he needs to, ‘check the lines that they want me to explain so I have to read the text again, which helps me understand it better’. He also agreed that he feels less anxious about coming to class having completed the flipped learning because, ‘I can be more confident in what I write about it’. He would like to hear the text read by someone (not immersive reader) and reports that the flipped learning tasks have been the right standard and length for him. This is his third attempt at English GCSE and he has enjoyed this different approach to learning. His grades have been consistently high, even with the remote learning, currently achieving a band 6/7 in Paper 1’s recent mock; his reading section was actually a band 8 – jumping 2 bands from his diagnostic reading assessment.

Student 4 – This student is studying a Level 2 Childcare Diploma. She has really embraced this project, always completing the surveys and responding to questions about the material and process fully, with some useful suggestions volunteered of her own volition. Where she did not complete the flipped learning, it was because she was in hospital. She felt that the flipped learning meant that she could approach the more complex questions in class with more confidence. Often, the teacher would find that she had completed the first few questions in the study guide as well, so she would be working at a different stage in class and completing extension work towards the end of the class.

This learner's view is that flipped learning for English GCSE 'works well' but that the text should be in the Forms' quiz rather than just in the anthology. As a result of that early feedback, we altered all future quizzes so that this was the case. She was then able to complete it even when on the 'bus' or 'in the bath'. She felt that 'some of the writing videos are just too long – interesting but too long' and concurs with the view of others that a teacher reading the text inside the quiz would be helpful as the Immersive Reader 'reads like a robot'. She was asked if having line numbers in the text or rephrasing the questions to reflect the find and retrieve questions more closely would be helpful and she firmly agreed. Having her completing the quizzes each time and scoring highly meant that the others also started to do it before class and work in class.

At 18, she is slightly older than the others, having missed a year due to severe ill-health, and does not care about being seen to be working hard. At the start of the year, she was working consistently at a high band 3 for reading, but a 4 in writing. In the recent Paper 1 mock, she achieved a band 9 in reading. She is producing some excellent independent work, achieving a band 6 in the recent Paper 1 mock for the writing element.

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