Exploring the Experiences of Flipped-learning in a Large Lecture Course in Teacher Education

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Contribution

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The aim of this paper is to present preliminary findings of a project in which a teacher education lecture series was transformed to a flipped learning design. The flipped learning design includes generally the ideas that students are provided online (lecture) material before class time, are engaged in discussion and collaborative group work during face-to-face sessions, and engage in higher-order activities (e.g. Stonebraker, 2015). Flipped learning fits well with the progressive aims to provide university students students-centered and individualized learning opportunities. There seems to be support for the efficiency of the flipped learning design on student attainment and engagement (e.g. Hibbard, Sung & Wells, 2016; O’Flaherty & Phillips, 2015; Little, 2015) and creativity (Al-Zahrani, 2015). According to Wenner & Palmer (2015) university students experienced flipped learning flexible and they were able to search their own ways of learning, however, student also thought that it is important to have clear structure in the flipped learning course. What comes to teachers viewpoints, it seems that flipped learning is potentially quite time-consuming also for a teacher with e.g. individual assessments. Also, Mortensen & Nicholson (2015) found that students experienced flipped-learning enjoyable. However, many a times, flipped learning practices take place in classroom-size groups or small group tutoring, not through mass lectures. In this paper the relationships with students’ experiences, their approaches to learning and epistemological beliefs are investigated in relation to the learning outcomes. There is evidence that students’ approaches to learning affect their experiences of a learning environment (e.g. Parpala, Lindblom-Ylänne, Komulainen, Litmanen & Hirsto, 2012). Therefore, these relations are investigated in more detail.
Method

In this study, students' experiences of a flipped learning environment was investigated in a mass lecture course of 80 students through repeated questionnaires. In the first lecture, all students responded to a questionnaire which included sections about their interest and motivation towards the course, and their epistemological beliefs, approaches to learning and preferred teaching and learning environments. They were also asked to draw a mind-map concerning their knowledge base on the key areas of the course. At the end of every lecture, students were asked to respond to a questionnaire with open-ended questions about their experiences of the flipped material, the amount of time used for studying it, and how they experienced other students' efforts. At the end of the course students will also asked about their general experiences of the course, own efforts and learning, and also to draw a mind-map of the key issues of the course. As the questionnaire were filled during in class period, the response rated were very high and only a couple of students refused the use of their responses in the research project.

Expected Outcomes

The questions addressed through the data acquired in this paper include viewpoints to regulation of learning, epistemological beliefs, preferred learning environments and general feelings about the module. As flipped learning assumes that students are active and invest time for learning outside teaching sessions, are students able to regulate their own learning this way? If not, how could we support them better. A common way of flipping is through recorded lectures, in this course students were given different kinds of tasks. How did students experience these different tasks, did they prefer one over another. Was a certain type of task more engaging for students between the lectures. Also, as learning depends on students’ own activity and understanding, instead of teachers’ presentations of knowledge, are students’ epistemic beliefs related to their experiences in the flipped learning course. How are students’ approaches to learning related to their experiences in this course?

The results will be discussed through student-centered learning design and the possibilities of flipped learning and flipped classroom. Also, some theoretical viewpoints will be discussed concerning the dynamic relationship between student characteristic, engagement and preferences in the learning environment.

References


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