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### **The Flipped German Classroom**

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#### **Abstract**

Over the past decade practitioners in many disciplines have sought to increase student learning by employing the flipped classroom approach to learning. Many practitioners have seen an immense increase in student learning by requiring students to have their first exposure to a new concept away from the classroom. With advances in technology, many online resources are used so students are able to access course materials at any time and in any place. This study investigates student and teacher attitudes and beliefs about learning German in terms of traditional and flipped learning approaches. Data was collected by means of questionnaires—students and teachers completed questionnaires at the beginning and end of the semester. Results indicate that students and teachers were overwhelmingly pleased with the results of student learning at the end of the semester based on the flipped classroom model.

#### **The Flipped German Classroom**

Based on recent research in education and language learning, the focus of beginning German courses at a large western university has recently changed from teacher-centered grammar explanations in class to student-centered, self-paced online grammar video tutorials outside of class. This paper presents the results of a one-semester empirical study where students in beginning German classes at Brigham Young University spent time traditionally spent completed homework outside of class taking mastery grammar quizzes, reviewing grammar and

vocabulary using online resources provided by the instructor, and watching online video tutorials similar to those made for math and science by Khan (2012) and for German by Stigter (2014) rather than completing regularly assigned homework. Because class time is no longer used for lengthy grammar explanations, class time is now spent assisting students in reaching language learning goals related to the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) Proficiency Guidelines for Speaking, Reading, Listening, and Writing and the Standards for Foreign Language Learning in the 21st Century (SFL) (NSFLP, 2006) through activities, assignments, and projects (Witten, 2013). For this study, teacher and student attitudes were measured by questionnaire responses at the beginning and end of the semester. Results indicate that making grammar explanations and practice learner-centered by allowing students to work outside class at their own pace promoted student confidence and comfort when participating in classroom activities.

Because people learn at different rates and according to different methods, lessons should be paced to the individual student's learning needs. Khan (2012) suggests that face time with a teacher in class should be a completely separate experience from a student's first exposure to new concepts. In fact, Khan also suggests that a student's first exposure to a new concept should be visually free of a teacher and that the classroom should be a workshop where the teacher can help students apply concepts and principles rather than a lecture where students sit passively and may or may not gain knowledge they will be able to apply later to their own language learning. By moving lengthy grammar explanations outside the classroom, class time can be used as a language production workshop.

### **Review of the Literature**

The flipped classroom is a form of blended learning of any subject that makes use of technology to influence classroom learning with the hope that the teacher will be able to spend more time interacting with students rather than lecturing. This is most frequently done using teacher- or publisher-created videos that students are required to view outside of class as assigned homework. These videos are often accompanied with comprehension questions to ensure that students pay attention to the recorded lectures. In flipped teaching, the student first studies the topic alone, using readings designated by the instructor, recorded lectures, and online tutorials. Then in the classroom the student is guided by the teacher to apply the knowledge gained outside class by solving problems and using the acquired knowledge in real-life situations. The role of the classroom teacher is to assist and mentor students when they need help applying what they have learned rather than to provide students with information for the first time and require students to apply the information without guidance. With the attention flipping the classroom at all levels and in all subjects of education, the Flipped Learning Network (2014) provides a definition of flipped learning for newcomers to the approach to teaching:

a pedagogical approach in which direct instruction moves from the group learning space to the individual learning space, and the resulting group space is

transformed into a dynamic, interactive learning environment where the educator guides students as they apply concepts and engage creatively in the subject matter.

At Brigham Young University, teachers of beginning German courses have begun implementing principles of the flipped classroom along with online grammar mastery quizzes. To provide a context and rationale for this change, this section will provide a review of the literature regarding three key topics relevant to this study: (1) the flipped classroom in general, (2) the flipped classroom in language learning, and (3) the role of mastery in becoming proficient in a foreign language (FL).

### **The Flipped Classroom in Education**

The concept of the flipped classroom is not new. It has been around for decades. The concept of the flipped classroom using technological advances, however, is new and has been gaining popularity over the past decade. Regarding the recent implementation of the flipped classroom in teaching and learning, Garrison and Kanuka (2004) write that the flipped classroom approach “is an integration of face-to-face and online learning experiences—not a layering of one on top of the other” (p. 99). Classroom time should complement exercises and readings done outside of class as assigned homework. The self-guided grammar tutorials and quizzes should be the basis for the engaging and real-world applications that teachers help students make during class time. Reynard (2007) recommends that:

face to face class meetings should be a method of scaffolding learning rather than the central instructional arena as in conventional courses. . . . Class time should be an important piece of the learning process for students and should provide dialog, group work. . . . or demonstrations of practice. . . . an effective and dynamic learning environment should provide heightened interaction for the learner. (pp. 3-4)

Because students focus on grammar and vocabulary learning outside class, teachers are able to spend class time guiding group and pair work, games, and task-based activities and helping students apply what they learn outside class to real-life situations. The skills presented in the online modules of the course are brought to life in the classroom through problem-solving tasks. The online flipped format and face-to-face time complement one another so that the students reap the benefits of both experiences because, in the words of Knowles (1998), “If we know why we are learning and if the reason fits our needs as we perceive them, we will learn quickly and deeply.”

In support of the flipped classroom concept, Khan (2012) argues that “[f]ormal education. . . . needs to be brought into closer alignment with the world as it actually is; into closer harmony with the way human beings actually learn and thrive” (p. 11). He continues his explanation by pointing out that people learn at different rates. Some students pick things up very quickly, while others need a lot more time to process and apply what they are being taught. Khan notes that

[q]uicker isn't necessarily smarter and slower definitely isn't dumber. Further, catching on quickly isn't the same as understanding thoroughly. So the pace of

learning is a question of style, not relative intelligence. The tortoise may very well end up with more knowledge—more useful, lasting knowledge—than the hare. (p. 20)

One of Khan's main points is that whether there are eight or fifty students in a class, each student will be at a different level of comprehension of a concept at any given time. The challenge here is that when the time comes for the exam and to move on, not all students have learned what they needed to learn to move on to the next concept. "[S]tudents could probably figure things out eventually—but that's exactly the problem. The standard classroom model doesn't really allow for eventual understanding. The class—of whatever size—has moved on (p. 21)." For these reasons, Khan recommends that lessons should be paced to individual student's needs and that basic concepts must be "deeply understood" before students will be able to master more advanced concepts (p. 21).

Online lessons allow teachers and students to work together during valuable class time that would otherwise be spent on lectures. But if the students have completed the lessons before class, students have knowledge to work with during class time so they can turn what they learned at home into deep knowledge. Khan (2012) notes that there are some people who are concerned that computer-based instruction will ultimately replace teachers. That is not the case. "Teachers become more important once students have the initial exposure to a concept online" (p. 35).

Khan (2012) insists that in learning a new subject, "no subject is ever finished. No concept is sealed off from other concepts. Knowledge is continuous; ideas flow" (p. 51). He suggests that learners should be supported to take on an active position to their own learning. "They shouldn't just take things in; they should figure things out" (p. 56). Active learning is "owned learning" (p. 56) and begins with allowing students to determine where and when they learn best. With the Internet and personal computers, students can learn adjective endings in German at 2:00 A.M. in their dorm room or at 9:00 P.M. in a coffee shop or at 6:00 A.M. on an exercise bike. Some learn better in the morning, others learn better during the day, and still others learn better at night. We also know that there are different learning styles, and with self-paced learning, the pace is right for every student because it is determined by the students themselves. One student might need two hours to complete a learning module on adjective endings in German while another might only need 20 minutes. If the module is online, a student who might need more time is able to take as much time as needed to grasp a concept without slowing an entire class down or being embarrassed to ask the teacher for help.

### **Anecdotal Evidence and Practical Application**

Recently, Professor Earl K. Stice (2014), PriceWaterhouseCoopers Professor of Accounting at Brigham Young University's School of Management, spoke to new faculty about the success he has had by flipping his accounting classes. He employs the techniques of guided learning outside class, small in-class discussion groups, and frequent online assessments so that he can bond with 700+ students in just one class. He requires students to study individually first outside of class and to come to an understanding of the material before applying it to in-class case studies

and discussions. His small in-class group discussions are carefully tailored so that all students in each group must participate, students apply theories and concepts they have studied at home to real-life situations, and to justify the cost of gathering 700 people for 75 minutes of classroom instruction. In order to bond with his 700+ students, he sends frequent schedule-related e-mails and chatty personal notes.

Stice points out that the universal dilemma for teaching an introductory accounting course is being able to accommodate the students who master the material very quickly and easily and the students who struggle to master the material (see Khan, 2012).

Students do not necessarily need to hear everything from their teacher's mouth. In fact, Middendorf and Kalish (1996) determined that students need a three- to five-minute period of warming up period at the beginning of a class which is followed by only ten to 18 minutes of prime focus time. Following this relative short period of focus, no matter how entertaining the teacher or exciting the subject matter, students start to tune out. Student focus usually shortly resumes near the end of class, but only for about three minutes.

Even though students do not need to hear new material directly from the professor in a classroom setting, they do need to receive specific guidance on what they need to learn on their own. Their learning can easily be assessed online, outside of class, without taking anything away from valuable class time. Further, online assessments can often provide immediate feedback.

The instructor's role in the flipped classroom is that of motivator rather than as the source of all knowledge on a given subject. According to Stice, the difficult beginning of flipping his classroom was to examine his course content and decide what material can be effectively learned by students outside of class with his specific guidance and what material would be better covered in the classroom under his personal supervision. In a typical week of Accounting 200, students first have directed individual study assignments on Monday, may attend an optional question/answer session on Tuesday, complete an online quiz by Tuesday evening, complete assigned readings and homework in preparation for in-class discussion on Wednesday, complete an online quiz by Wednesday evening, meet in class on Thursday in assigned groups to complete application activities, and complete an online post-class quiz by Friday evening. The study materials and readings are provided to students online (electronic readings, videos, etc.) or as part of their assigned textbook. The instructor gives very specific and detailed instructions on what and how to study. For example, instead of directing students to "read Chapter 3," the instructor would direct students to "interpret all lines, slopes, and intercepts in a breakeven graph including the slope of the total cost line, the slope of the total revenue line, the intercept of the total cost line, and the intersection of the total cost and total revenue lines." Then the instructor directs students to take an online quiz to assess content mastery. By doing this, Professor Stice is able to reduce variance in understanding when students arrive in class. By employing well-designed in-class group activities, instructors can keep students more engaged in classroom discussion rather than listening to the instructor lecture. Although teaching and learning languages is not the same as teaching and learning accounting, the main

principles employed by Professor Stice for his flipped accounting classroom can also be applied to flipping German language classrooms.

### **The Flipped Classroom in Language Learning**

Language teachers all over the United States are seeing positive results after implementing the flipped classroom into their language teaching (Ducate, Lomicka, & Lord, 2012; Rubio & Thoms, 2012; Scullen, 2014; Stigter, 2014; Tecedor, 2014; Witten, 2013). Stigter (2014) provides a clear and succinct explanation of the flipped language classroom:

When the concept of the 'flipped classroom' is applied, the language course can be transformed. This approach enables the instructor to focus almost exclusively on input and output, while grammar is taught outside of face-to-face time via short video explanations and coordinating exercises. Although students must remain in the same chapter, they are able to review and repeat content as often as they wish at their own pace. (p. 6)

She continues by explaining that students are made responsible for their own learning and for advocating for assistance when they need it.

Scullen (2014) explains three key reasons the French program at the University of Maryland started using the flipped classroom approach in 2012. First, students are required to do more learning outside of class. At the beginning of every class, students take a five-question quiz to demonstrate that they learned what was assigned and to provide feedback to the teacher about what the students have learned. Second, teaching time is limited. In most beginning courses in large university language programs, students are responsible for teaching one or two courses each semester. Even though training is provided at the beginning of the semester and ongoing training takes place throughout the semester, student instructors are still not very experienced language teachers. By requiring students to work on grammar and vocabulary outside of class, student instructors can more easily facilitate language practice. In addition, explicit instruction by teacher tends to be more valuable after students engage with the material outside of class. Students read about a grammar topic and work on exercises using the grammar topic outside of class. Then if they still have questions or need explanations, they are more open to the grammar concept. Third, teachers can provide more in-class interaction and engagement for students, thus making class time essential for student language learning.

Ducate, Lomicka & Lord (2012) describe what the flipped classroom makes possible for students teachers to accomplish during class time: "Advances in technologies, such as those already described, have enabled us to reach a point in which students can accomplish a great deal by working independently, thus reserving class time for F2F (face to face) communication and interactive learning" (p. 70).

After flipping her beginning Spanish class, Witten (2013) described that now that grammar explanations take place outside the classroom, class time is

spent differently: “We can spend the time in class practicing their new skills and vocabulary with skits, conversations, presentations, and projects which really spark the students’ interest” (p. 266).

The hope in the FL classroom is that because students have read about and practiced new grammar concepts and have been exposed to new vocabulary outside of class, they will be able to apply what they have learned in class with assistance from the teacher and classmates to create meaningful language use that will lead to deep understanding of what they learned outside class. Teachers should continue to assist students in reaching language learning goals related to the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) Proficiency Guidelines for Speaking, Reading, Listening, and Writing and the Standards for Foreign Language Learning in the 21st Century (SFL) (NSFLP, 2006) through activities, assignments, presentations, and projects.

### **The Role of Mastery in Language Learning**

For as long as languages have been taught and learned, teachers and learners have expected learners to master grammar concepts of the language. Even in 1993, just seven years after the ACTFL Oral Proficiency Guidelines (ACTFL, 2012) were first introduced in 1986, DeMado (1993) explains the way he perceived the difference between mastery and proficiency in language learning: “Proficiency supports language study as a life skill; something to which all interested...have a right to gain access. Viewed purely as an academic area and using intellect as the qualifying criteria, mastery rigorously limits candidacy to a privileged few” (p. 31). DeMado’s view of mastery in language learning has recently been called into question (1993).

In 2012, almost two decades after DeMado’s publication, Khan explains his understanding of the role of mastery in learning: Mastery takes place when students “adequately comprehend a given concept before being expected to understand a more advanced one” (p. 37). Along these lines, noted neuroscientist Kandel writes: “For a memory to persist, the incoming information must be thoroughly and deeply processed. This is accomplished by attending to the information and associating it meaningfully and systematically with knowledge already well established in memory” (2006, pp. 123-124).

In a recent chapter on practical strategies for flipping the classroom, Bennett (2013) admits that mastery learning is difficult to describe. For him, mastery learning is “giving the students an opportunity to both direct and defend their learning” (p. 8). He explains that the way each student is able to do this might look different. One student might take a traditional exam, another might give a presentation to the class, another might teach a classmate the concept, and yet another might demonstrate mastery through writing or some other medium. The main reason he has shifted to mastery learning is because students take information in and write it down on a test without deeply learning the information. Most students were not able to remember the information they had memorized for a test even the day following the test! In order to solidify learning, Khan (2012) suggests that once learners reach a certain level of mastery in a field of learning, they should

teach the concept to other students so that they develop a deeper understanding of the concept. This re-teaching could easily take place during regular class time.

Based on these recent guidelines by Khan (2012), Kandel (2006), and Bennett (2013), mastery of grammar principles seems to be an important and necessary part of language learning. Without mastering and deeply understanding grammar principles, language learners are not prepared to move on to learning grammar principles that build on previously taught grammar principles. Also, for students to be able to reach the Superior level on the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines for Speaking, they must “be able to communicate with accuracy and fluency...and demonstrate no pattern of error in the use of basic structures” (ACTFL, 2012). If students do not master grammar principles in beginning courses, they will likely never move beyond the Intermediate level.

## **Method**

### *Participants*

At Brigham Young University, 137 students participated in this study. 104 students are female, and 33 students are male. Their ages range from 18-23. Twenty-two students had been to a German-speaking country. Thirty-one students are engineering majors, 73 are humanities majors, six are business majors, five are science majors, 19 were education majors, two are advertising majors, and one was a math major. One hundred thirty-five are native speakers of American English, and two are native Spanish speakers. By the end of German 101, the first semester course, the department goal is for at least 75% of our students to reach the Novice High level on the ACTFL Oral Proficiency Scale. By the end of German 102, the second semester course, the department goal is for at least 75% of our students to reach the Intermediate Low level.

Seven student instructors participated in this study. Four are male, and three are female. Their ages range from 21-25. All seven have lived in a German-speaking country for a minimum of 18 months. Four are German teaching majors, one is music teaching major with a German teaching minor, and two are engineering majors. Two are native speakers of German, three are Superior speakers of German, one is an Advanced High speaker, and one is Advanced Mid.

### *Research Design*

All students and teachers completed a questionnaire at the beginning of the course (see Appendices A and B) and at the end of the course (see Appendices C and D) online using Qualtrics online data collection software. Qualtrics made it easy for students and teachers to complete the questionnaire quickly online and type comments about questionnaire items to include with their questionnaire. The questionnaire items were chosen based on recent research on flipped teaching in FL classrooms (Scullen, 2014; Tecedor, 2014; Stigter, 2014; Witten, 2013). IRB approval was secured prior to the administration of the questionnaire.

## Results

### *Student questionnaire at the beginning of the semester*

On the first day of class before the flipped classroom model was introduced, student completed an online questionnaire. They were instructed to answer as honestly as possible and were told that their responses would be kept anonymous, that instructor would never see their responses, and that their grade would in no way be affected by their responses. There were 137 students who completed the questionnaire. Given students familiarization with technology and frequent use of smart phones, tablets, and computers, the result that the majority of students (73%) agreed that online resources are helpful in learning German is not surprising. Also not surprising are the overwhelming results that most students agreed that knowledge of German grammar (93%) and knowledge of vocabulary (94%) are both important to their overall learning of German.

What is surprising, however, is that even though 48% agree that online grammar quizzes that provided immediately feedback would be helpful to their overall learning of German, more than half of all students (52%) were uncertain whether these online grammar quizzes would be helpful. Another result of interest is that 51% of students agreed that the best way to learn German grammar is to have their teacher lecture on it in class, while 21% neither agreed nor disagreed, and 28% disagreed.

### *Teacher questionnaire at the beginning of the semester*

The results of the teacher questionnaire at the beginning of the semester also yielded interesting results. Teachers completed the questionnaire before teaching the first day of the new semester. Even after the training they had received on the flipped classroom model, 57% neither agreed nor disagreed that online resources are helpful to their students in learning German, 43% agreed, and none of the teachers disagreed. These exact same responses were given when asked if online grammar video tutorials were helpful to their students in learning German. One written teacher response to these questions was from a teacher who had been teaching for three semesters who wrote: "Some online resources can be difficult for students in the target language. Students can get overwhelmed and discouraged when they don't understand anything at all on a website."

Surprisingly, only one teacher agreed that online grammar quizzes that provided immediate feedback could be helpful in learning German, while three teachers neither agreed nor disagreed, and three teachers disagreed. When asked to explain their response, one teacher wrote: "I can see that immediate feedback could be helpful, but if there's no teacher there to explain why something is wrong, a student might not benefit from it." Another surprising result is that all teachers agree that the best way for students to learn grammar is to have their teacher lecture on it in class. One teacher explained: "Students can read about grammar at home in the textbook, but sometimes they don't do it. It seems easiest for me as the teacher to just prepare presentations about grammar to use in class. Sometimes students still don't get the grammar, even when I teach it!"

Not surprisingly, all teachers agree that knowledge of German grammar and vocabulary is important to students' overall learning of German. One teacher wrote: "Even though we are focusing on proficiency in teaching, without grammar and vocabulary, students can never progress from one sub-level to another. Grammar and vocabulary are the basis of all successful communication in learning another language."

*Student questionnaire at the end of the semester*

During the last week of the semester, students received a link in an e-mail to the questionnaire for them to complete at the end of their flipped learning German course. The results were reassuringly and overwhelmingly positive. All students agreed on the following items:

- The quality of my communication skills in German has improved.
- I felt more engaged in this class than in other classes I have taken.
- If given the choice, I would continue learning German with the flipped classroom model.
- The flipped classroom model helped me feel more comfortable speaking German during class.
- I feel confident participating in basic conversations in German.
- Online resources are helpful in learning German.
- Online video tutorials on grammar are important in learning German.
- Online grammar quizzes that allow me to receive immediate feedback are helpful in learning German.
- Knowledge of German grammar is important to my overall learning of German.
- Knowledge of vocabulary is important to my overall learning of German.

Regarding the flipped learning approach to learning German, one student commented: "I wasn't sure how well I could do in a class where so much was online and was to be done outside of class as homework. I was pleasantly surprised to see how quickly I came to like working on grammar exercises online whenever I wanted and wherever I wanted." Another student wrote: "I really liked the online grammar quizzes. I liked the immediate feedback and explanation if I got a wrong answer. I could retake the quiz as many times as I wanted. This helped me feel confident in my grammar abilities." And another student stated: "The online grammar tutorials saved me. I was worried they would be really boring and hard to understand, but they were easy to understand and kind of fun. I liked that I could watch them as many times as I needed."

Students also agreed that the following contributed to their learning of German that semester:

- Reading grammar explanations online before class in *Deutsch im Blick*.
- The grammar video tutorials.
- The online grammar quizzes.
- Completing grammar exercises online before class.
- Completing vocabulary exercises online before class.
- Speaking only German in class.

All students were also in agreement that the best way to learn grammar is not for the teacher to lecture on it in class. These results are comforting and encouraging. Making the decision to flip all of the beginning German classes at a time was difficult to make. Some teachers (Stigter, 2014; Witten, 2013) strongly suggest flipping just one class at a time or just one component of one class. With departmental proficiency goals in mind, professors at Brigham Young University strive to keep up-to-date on current research and best practices for teaching languages. With overwhelmingly positive results from teachers and students, we are confident to go forward with flipped learning in our beginning German courses.

*Teacher questionnaire at the end of the semester*

During the last week of the semester, teachers were asked to complete another online questionnaire to rate how they felt the semester went using the flipped classroom model. All teachers agreed on the following questionnaire items:

- The quality of students' communication skills in German has improved
- Students were more engaged in this class than in previous German classes I have taught.
- Classroom time was used more effectively than in previous German classes I have taught.
- The flipped classroom model helped my students feel more comfortable speaking German during class than in previous German classes I have taught.
- Students seem more confident participating in basic conversations in German than in previous German classes I have taught.
- If given the choice, I would continue to teach German using the flipped class model.
- Online resources are helpful for my students in learning German.
- Online video tutorials on grammar are helpful for my students in learning German.
- Online grammar quizzes that allow students to receive immediate feedback are helpful for my students in learning German.
- Knowledge of German grammar is important to my students' overall learning of German.
- Knowledge of vocabulary is important to my students' overall learning of German.

All teachers were also in agreement that the best way to learn grammar is not for the teacher to lecture on it in class. These results are reassuring, especially when compared to their responses at the beginning of the semester when all teachers agreed that the best way to learn grammar is for the teacher to lecture on it in class. At the beginning of the semester, not all teachers agreed that online grammar quizzes with immediate feedback could be helpful to students, and the majority were uncertain whether online resources and video tutorials could be helpful to students learning German. One teacher wrote:

At the beginning of the semester, I was convinced that I was the best resource for students to learn German grammar. I have lived in Germany, and my German is Superior. The beginning students know very little

German and need all the help they can get. I now believe very strongly that by having students watch video tutorials to introduce grammar concepts then work on exercises to help them practice the grammar concepts at home, they are better prepared to use the grammar in class.

Another teacher wrote: “My students loved the online grammar quizzes! They were able to take them as many times as they wanted. The immediate feedback they received was really helpful for them.” For the first time in years, all teachers agree on how beginning German should be taught at Brigham Young University. Teachers commented that they were able to follow the curriculum easily and found it easier to work on helping students become proficient in speaking and writing during class time.

### **Discussion**

A one-semester empirical study where students enrolled in beginning German classes at Brigham Young University used homework time outside of class learning and reviewing grammar and vocabulary using online resources so that class time could be spent assisting students in reaching language learning and language proficiency goals based yielded positive results. Student and teacher attitudes toward flipped learning were measured by questionnaire responses at the beginning and end of the semester. Results of both student and teacher questionnaires at the beginning of the semester indicate that some students and teachers were uncertain about implementing the flipped learning environment to learning German, a discipline that has traditionally been taught using at least some teacher-centered grammar explanations. Also, in learning languages at the university-level, in the past many students have relied heavily on their teacher as their sole source of knowledge about German language, history, culture, etc. Students also have not been encouraged to communicate with their teacher, or classmates when they need assistance beyond classroom instruction.

As indicated in results of the questionnaire students and teachers completed at the end of the semester, with the flipped classroom, students are able to take the time they need outside of class to work on grammar and vocabulary they will need to succeed in classroom activities that are designed to improve their overall proficiency of the German language. The classroom tasks and activities students participate in focus on ensuring students have a solid grasp of functions, contexts, and text type while also focusing on the three modes of communication for the Novice High level, which also includes activities that push them to produce language at the Intermediate level. These activities include the following: information gap activities in pairs, role plays, guided short reading and listening assignments, scaffolded and non-scaffolded short writing assignments, interviews, Student-led Oral Proficiency Interviews (Bryan, 2014), prepared formal presentations, small group discussions, and problem-solving activities.

By the end of the semester, all teachers and students agreed that online resources could help students learn German and that teacher grammar lectures were not the best way to learn grammar. All students reported feeling comfortable and confident about their ability to speak German in class. This is something that

many students do not develop until after they have been learning German for a year, or longer.

### **Conclusion**

By the end of the first semester of the flipped German classroom, teachers and students overwhelmingly agreed that the flipped classroom model was a positive influence on German teaching and learning in beginning German classes. These results are in line with recent research on the flipped classroom in general (Bennett, 2013; Gleason, 2013; Khan, 2012) and on the flipped classroom in language learning specifically (Ducate, Lomicka, & Lord, 2012; Rubio & Thoms, 2012; Scullen, 2014; Shrager, 2014; Stigter, 2014; Tecedor, 2014; Witten, 2013). Further, because the teaching and practice of grammar and vocabulary takes place outside of the classroom, students and teachers are able to focus on using grammar and vocabulary to become proficient in producing German in speech and writing. As questions arise about how to use grammar and vocabulary in practiced and spontaneous communication during class, the teacher is able to answer student questions, provide correct models, and assist students in creating with the language. With the goal of proficiency in mind, about 75% of all students reach the Novice High level at the end of German 101 (first semester) on the ACTFL Oral Proficiency Scale, and about 75% of all students reach the Intermediate Low level by the end of German 102 (second semester German).

### **Implications for Future Research**

Future research studies could investigate the effect of flipped learning on different languages. This study only focused on German, and it would be beneficial to find out if teachers and students of Spanish, Chinese, Arabic, etc. find the flipped classroom approach to language learning as effective as German students do. Additionally, this study only focused on beginning learners of German. It would be advantageous to find out if teachers and students at the intermediate and advanced levels of German and other languages find the flipped classroom approach to intermediate and advanced language learning to be valuable.

Another facet that would be beneficial to explore would be to administer ACTFL Oral Proficiency Interviews at the beginning and end of the semester to see if the flipped classroom model actually promotes proficiency and successful language learning.

### **Limitations of This Study**

The main limitation of this study is the population from which the sample of participants was taken. Participants were all students enrolled in beginning German classes at Brigham Young University who were willing to participate. All students taken beginning German were in sections of German that employed the flipped classroom approach to learning German. There were no treatment and control groups in this study. Likewise, the teachers who participated were all student instructors at Brigham Young University and were willing to participate.

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**Appendix A****Results of the Beginning-of-the-Semester Questionnaire (Students)**

Total responses out of 137 students and total percentages for each questionnaire item.

	<b>1 (strongly disagree)</b>	<b>2 (disagree)</b>	<b>3 (neither agree nor disagree)</b>	<b>4 (agree)</b>	<b>5 (strongly agree)</b>
1. Online resources are helpful in learning German.	0/0%	1/0.7%	36/26%	77/56%	23/17%
2. Online video tutorials on grammar are helpful in learning German.	0/0%	0/0%	62/45%	67/49%	8/6%
3. Online grammar quizzes that allow me to receive immediate feedback are helpful in learning German.	0/0%	0/0%	71/52%	52/38%	14/10%
4. Knowledge of German grammar is important to my overall learning of German.	0/0%	0/0%	10/7%	39/29%	88/64%
5. Knowledge of vocabulary is important to my overall learning of German.	0/0%	0/0%	9/7%	31/23%	97/71%
6. The best way to learn grammar is to have my teacher lecture on it in class.	17/12%	22/16%	28/21%	26/19%	44/32%

## Appendix B

## Results of the Beginning-of-the-Semester Questionnaire (Teachers)

Total responses out of 7 teachers and total percentages for each questionnaire item.

	1 (strongly disagree)	2 (disagree)	3 (neither agree nor disagree)	4 (agree)	5 (strongly agree)
1. Online resources are helpful in learning German.	0/0%	0/0%	4/57%	2/29%	1/14%
2. Online video tutorials on grammar are helpful in learning German.	0/0%	0/0%	4/57%	2/29%	1/14%
3. Online grammar quizzes that allow students to receive immediate feedback are helpful in learning German.	1/14%	2/29%	3/43%	1/14%	0/0%
4. Knowledge of German grammar is important to students' overall learning of German.	0/0%	0/0%	0/0%	2/29%	5/71%
5. Knowledge of vocabulary is important to students' overall learning of German.	0/0%	0/0%	0/0%	2/29%	5/71%
6. The best way for students to learn grammar is to have their teacher lecture on it in class.	0/0%	0/0%	0/0%	3/43%	4/57%

**Appendix C****End-of-the-Semester Questionnaire (Students)**

Total responses out of 137 students and total percentages for each questionnaire item.

<b>Part A.</b>	<b>1 (strongly disagree)</b>	<b>2 (disagree)</b>	<b>3 (neither agree nor disagree)</b>	<b>4 (agree)</b>	<b>5 (strongly agree)</b>
1. The quality of my communication skills in German has improved.	0/0%	0/0%	0/0%	49/36%	88/64%
2. I felt more engaged in this class than in other classes I have taken.	0/0%	0/0%	0/0%	46/34%	91/66%
3. Classroom time was used effectively.	0/0%	0/0%	23/17%	63/54%	51/37%
4. If given the choice, I would continue learning German with the flipped classroom model.	0/0%	0/0%	0/0%	16/12%	121/88%
5. The flipped classroom model helped me feel more comfortable speaking German during class.	0/0%	0/0%	0/0%	117/85%	20/15%
6. I feel confident participating in basic conversations in German.	0/0%	0/0%	0/0%	8/6%	129/94%
7. Online resources are helpful in learning German.	0/0%	0/0%	0/0%	98/71%	39/29%
8. Online video tutorials on grammar are important in learning German.	0/0%	0/0%	0/0%	101/74%	36/26%

9. Online grammar quizzes that allow me to receive immediate feedback are helpful in learning German.	0/0%	0/0%	0/0%	41/30%	96/70%
10. Knowledge of German grammar is important to my overall learning of German.	0/0%	0/0%	0/0%	15/11%	122/89%
11. Knowledge of vocabulary is important to my overall learning of German.	0/0%	0/0%	0/0%	9/7%	128/93%
12. The best way to learn grammar is to have my teacher lecture on it in class.	0/0%	0/0%	43/31%	66/48%	28/21%

<b>Part B.</b> How much do you think each of the following contributed to your learning of German this semester?	<b>1 (strongly disagree)</b>	<b>2 (disagree)</b>	<b>3 (neither agree nor disagree)</b>	<b>4 (agree)</b>	<b>5 (strongly agree)</b>
1. Reading grammar explanations online before class in <i>Deutsch im Blick</i> .	0/0%	0/0%	0/0%	86/63%	51/37%
2. The grammar video tutorials.	0/0%	0/0%	0/0%	46/34%	91/66%
3. The online grammar quizzes.	0/0%	0/0%	0/0%	33/24%	104/76%
4. Completing grammar exercises online before class.	0/0%	0/0%	0/0%	45/33%	92/67%
5. Completing vocabulary exercises online before class.	0/0%	0/0%	0/0%	48/35%	89/65%
6. Speaking German in class.	0/0%	0/0%	0/0%	32/23%	105/77%
7. Teacher explanations in class.			0/0%	0/0%	0/0%

**Appendix D****Results of the End-of-the-Semester Questionnaire (Teachers)**

Total responses out of 137 students and total percentages for each questionnaire item.

<b>Part A.</b>	<b>1 (strongly disagree)</b>	<b>2 (disagree)</b>	<b>3 (neither agree nor disagree)</b>	<b>4 (agree)</b>	<b>5 (strongly agree)</b>
1. The quality of my students' communication skills in German has improved.	0/0%	0/0%	0/0%	1/14%	6/86%
2. Students were more engaged in this class than in previous German classes I have taught.	0/0%	0/0%	0/0%	1/14%	6/86%
3. Classroom time was used more effectively than in previous German classes I have taught.	0/0%	0/0%	0/0%	1/14%	6/86%
4. If given the choice, I would continue teaching German with the flipped classroom model.	0/0%	0/0%	0/0%	0/0%	7/100%
5. The flipped classroom model helped my students feel more comfortable speaking German during class than in previous German classes I have taught.	0/0%	0/0%	0/0%	1/14%	6/86%

6. Students seem more confident participating in basic conversations in German than in previous German classes I have taught.	0/0%	0/0%	0/0%	0/0%	7/100%
7. Online resources are helpful for my students in learning German.	0/0%	0/0%	0/0%	3/43%	4/57%
8. Online video tutorials on grammar are helpful for my students in learning German.	0/0%	0/0%	0/0%	1/14%	6/86%
9. Online grammar quizzes that allow students to receive immediate feedback are helpful for my students in learning German.	0/0%	0/0%	0/0%	2/29%	5/71%
10. Knowledge of German grammar is important to my students' overall learning of German.	0/0%	0/0%	0/0%	1/14%	6/86%
11. Knowledge of vocabulary is important to my students' overall learning of German.	0/0%	0/0%	0/0%	0/0%	7/100%
12. The best way to learn grammar is for me as the teacher lecture on it in class.	6/86%	1/14%	0/0%	0/0%	0/0%

Part B. How much do you think each of the following contributed to your students' learning of German this semester?	1 (strongly disagree)	2 (disagree)	3 (neither agree nor disagree)	4 (agree)	5 (strongly agree)
1. Reading grammar explanations online before class in <i>Deutsch im Blick</i> .	0/0%	0/0%	0/0%	1/14%	6/86%
2. The grammar video tutorials.	0/0%	0/0%	0/0%	0/0%	7/100%
3. The online grammar quizzes.	0/0%	0/0%	1/14%	1/14%	5/71%
4. Completing grammar exercises online before class.	0/0%	0/0%	0/0%	0/0%	7/100%
5. Completing vocabulary exercises online before class.	0/0%	0/0%	0/0%	0/0%	7/100%
6. Speaking only German in class.	0/0%	0/0%	0/0%	0/0%	7/100%
7. Teacher explanations of grammar in class.	5/71%	2/29%	0/0%	0/0%	0/0%