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Instructors as Designers of Learning Experiences: A Case Study of a Flipped Intermediate Spanish Course

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Abstract

This study investigated the experiences and perceptions of two instructors while designing, teaching, and evaluating a flipped, intermediate Spanish course. Qualitative data was gathered through pre-post semi-structured interviews, curriculum design documents, class observations, and student course evaluations. The findings revealed that beliefs about teaching and learning, tensions between pedagogy and technology choices, appropriateness of CALL and in-class tasks, and sustainability of the learning environment shaped the instructors' approach to design and teach the flipped CALL course. Discussion on how the flipped approached served to facilitate and sustain communicative, task-based instruction with opportunities to integrate tasks and technology are presented.

Keywords: CALL tasks, flipped learning, course design, communicative tasks, instructor's experiences.

Background

Language instructors have resorted to technology that, integrated with the pedagogical approach, facilitate opportunities for learners to use the language in and out of the classroom (Moranski & Kim, 2016; Vitta & Al-Hoorie, 2020). An approach that has attracted language instructor's attention relatively recent is flipped learning. Flipped learning refers to an approach that "inverts the traditional classroom model by introducing course concepts before class, allowing educators to use class time to guide each student through active, practical, innovative applications of the course principles" (Flipped Learning Global, 2021. para. 4). This model uses active learning strategies to increase learner engagement, focusing on making the challenging content more accessible to learners, and redistributing the learning processes between inside and outside the classroom. Thus, the flipped learning pedagogy seems suitable for creating more learner-centered language instruction and communicative activities (Buitrago, 2017; Russell & Murphy-Judy, 2020).

Research on flipped language learning has mainly examined learning outcomes and students' perceptions. Findings are mixed suggesting, on the one hand, that flipped learning can promote language acquisition and development (Kang, 2015; Leis et al., 2015; Moranski & Kim, 2016; Obari & Lambacher, 2015), while

on the other hand, flipped learning might trigger negative reactions to the delivery of online content (Chen Hsieh et al., 2017; Egbert et al., 2014). Now that existing research on flipped learning has investigated learning outcomes and students' perspectives, an examination of instructor experience in designing, implementing and evaluating flipped language courses is warranted. Studying these experiences, we will be able to underscore the potential of the flipped learning approach to bridge theoretical and practical underpinnings to transform foreign language instruction and truly promote a task-based communicative approach where students enhance their language performance. This qualitative case study examines the *experiences and perceptions of two instructors while designing, teaching, and evaluating a flipped, intermediate Spanish course* that implemented a computer-assisted language learning (CALL) component.

Pedagogical Perspectives

Designing a flipped language learning experience involves integrating technology and language pedagogy in a complex process where technology is not neutral and can have a significant impact on language learning, use, contexts, and multiliteracies (Chun et al., 2016). Instructors who develop their courses adopt and adapt strategies to create a clear course plan (Branch & Dousay, 2015; Graves, 2000) and to increase opportunities that expose learners to contexts where they can use the language in formal and informal contexts (Collins & Muñoz, 2016).

Pedagogical Tasks for Flipped Learning

The integration of pedagogical and technological choices for designing a flipped language learning experience pertains to content, teaching strategies, assessments, technology, and learner support. Instructor's decisions derive from their own knowledge, practice, expertise, and conceptualizations about language teaching and learning (Graves, 2000; Mowlaie & Rahimi, 2010). The pedagogical decisions also derive from the overarching language goals and outcomes. For instance, learning and using the language require effective strategies and conditions to engage learners in authentic and contextualized activities or tasks to address their communication needs and interests (Lee & Van Patten, 2003; Nunan, 2004; Savignon, 2007). Hence, students are expected to demonstrate their performance through tasks and activities where they show their ability to use the language they learned. In order to promote language performance, learners need to engage in real uses of the language so that they can show evidence of what they can do with it. This type of engagement involves tasks that prepare learners to use the language in functional communication and to mobilize grammatical knowledge. Performance in the language can be evidenced by "what the language learner is able to do, in what contexts and content areas, how much and what kind of language the learners is able to produce or understand, the expectations of accuracy, and what strategies the language learner uses to communicate" (ACTFL, 2015, p. 3). In this regard, language performance can be maximized through pedagogical tasks.

For designing CALL tasks for flipped learning, instructors rely on the resources they have at hand, their dispositions towards technology, and the affordances the tools provide for language learning (Chun et al., 2016). Language learners'

increased and extended exposure to the target language in the classroom, where they can interact and communicate with their instructor using the target language, can be beneficial to their linguistic development (Collins & Muñoz, 2016; Muñoz, 2012). Because the quality of the classroom time matters and plays a key role in the exposure to the language, designing flipped CALL curriculum necessitates careful analysis and plan.

Understanding course design as "a system in the sense that planning for one component will contribute to others; changes to one component will influence all the others" (Graves, 2000, p. 4), can help instructors interrelate the course components in a structured, logical, and consistent way to warrant pedagogical content knowledge (Schulman, 1987), effective technology integration (Koehler & Mishra, 2009), and principles of second language acquisition and CALL (Neumeier, 2005). Instructors usually find themselves immersed in integrating and balancing learning activities, content, and assessments. Their own personal and professional experiences may shape the way they develop and teach a course. Furthermore, their own beliefs about learning another language determines their teaching and assessment practice. Thus, this study examined the ways in which two instructors conceptualized the pedagogical approach that aligned to the ACTFL standards, integrated CALL and methodological strategies, and held roles as course designers and instructors.

Flipped Language Learning

Research-based conditions that foster learning a language can align with the flipped learning approach. For instance, flipped learning can facilitate opportunities to increase interaction and negotiation of meaning because learners can engage in authentic tasks, be creative with the language, receive more individual feedback, lower their language learning anxiety, and develop autonomy (Egbert et al., 2014). Flipped learning can also promote digital literacy and encourage the use of technology for language learning (Webb & Doman, 2020). A flipped language class is similar to many current practices where direct explanations of content material is assigned prior to class, and the time in class is usually used to promote interaction, scaffolding, and agency (Moranski, & Kim, 2016). However, for Moranski and Kim (2016), the apparent connection between the language and flipped learning mostly responds to integrating technology to deliver complex instruction rather than to reconceptualizing the role of the learning spaces.

Research on students' perspectives and learning outcomes in a flipped model has shown mixed results with regard to the effectiveness of this approach for language development. On the one hand, researchers have found learners improved performance and communicative skills (Ishikawa et al., 2015; Obari & Lambacher, 2015), developed better linguistic and lexical understanding (Kang, 2015; Leis et al., 2015; Moranski & Kim, 2016), applied content concepts effectively in class (Egbert et al., 2015; Ishikawa et al., 2015), increased their motivation (Chen Hsieh et al., 2016; Evseeva, & Solozhenko, 2015), had flexible access to content materials online (Hernández-Nanclares & Pérez-Rodríguez, 2016; Ishikawa et al., 2015), and developed technological skills (Egbert et al., 2014). On the other hand, researchers have also found that students might not feel comfortable with the delivery of grammar

content online (Chen Hsieh et al., 2016; Egbert et al., 2014; Hernández-Nanclares & Pérez-Rodríguez, 2016). For example, in Egbert et al.'s (2014) study, students showed a clear preference for direct and explicit instruction by their instructor inside the classroom.

Flipped learning has been implemented to facilitate students' use of the language in active communicative tasks in the classroom scaffolded by the instructor. Communicative tasks are theorized to place learners in realistic situations as close to real-world contexts as possible (Savignon, 2007). Thus, language tasks in the classroom involve the use of the language for communicative purposes with learners focusing on conveying meaning rather than on producing linguistic items. It is important to note that in these pedagogical tasks, grammar is not neglected. To the contrary, "meaning and form are interrelated and grammar exists to enable the language user to express different communicative meanings" (Nunan, 2004, p.4). Therefore, the ability to communicate with others develops more from engaging in communication itself than from the mere learning and practicing of linguistic forms (Lee & VanPatten, 2003; Nunan, 2004).

In designing a flipped course, instructors need to determine the extent and depth of content, create assessments and learning activities, select the modes of delivery, and evaluate the learning outcomes (Branch & Dousay, 2015; Carr-Chellman, 2010). Research on instructors' approaches to transform their courses utilizing flipped learning as the underlying platform to build CALL and leverage class time remains scarce. This study aims to fill this gap by investigating how two language instructors in a higher education context integrated pedagogical and technological choices through the flipped learning model. Understanding the instructional choices can help in designing and implementing programs that prepare students from the start of their language courses to transfer what they learn in the classroom to real world situations, and to be able use a language well and in culturally appropriate ways to accomplish real-world tasks (Eddy, 2014). Instructor voices in the process of course design will help us identify their systems of beliefs, process, challenges, outcomes, and concerns related to the affordances and limitations of flipped CALL.

The research questions that guided this study are:
1. How do instructors experience designing, teaching, and evaluating the flipped intermediate Spanish course?
2. How do instructors perceive the success of language teaching and learning in the flipped intermediate Spanish course?

Methodology

This study used a qualitative case study design (Yin, 2014) to examine the experiences and perspectives of designing, teaching and evaluating a flipped Spanish course. The case study helps to better capture the circumstances in which the participants (instructors) designed and implemented the flipped approach and reveal the potential of this approach within the curricular structure of the course. The embedded units of analysis included two participants, (1) the language coordinator and lead instructor and (2) the course instructor of the second iteration of the course. Through this case study, the researcher assumed a relativist perspective to delve into the epistemological, pedagogical, and technological perspectives of each participant and the ways in which they applied these perspectives and interpreted their own experiences throughout the flipped CALL course.

Research Context

This study is situated within the Lower-Division Spanish Language Program at a large land-grant university in the Mid-West of the U.S. and is part of a design-based research project for flipping Spanish language courses. This research study was conducted with a flipped CALL intermediate Spanish course which corresponds to second-year of college Spanish. The intermediate Spanish course had been offered in a hybrid format in previous years where learners met in class two times per week and participated in a synchronous session two times per week. The instructors in the program believed that this format was ineffective for students to meaningfully interact and communicate in spoken Spanish. Therefore, the course was redesigned to optimize class time and leverage communicative and interactive tasks that promote and increased language performance.

Research Participants

This study used a purposeful sampling to select the participants. Two instructors from a group of six instructors teaching the intermediate Spanish courses were invited to participate in the study. Raul and Deborah (pseudonyms) were scheduled to teach the first of two second-year courses in the academic year 2016-2017. Considering the need to implement a more effective pedagogical approach in the Spanish program, Raul led the course redevelopment project for this first course which offered one section in each academic semester. Raul , a native English speaker, as the coordinator of the Lower Division Spanish Program redeveloped the course in the Summer of 2016 and taught the course in the Fall of that year, whereas Deborah, a native Spanish speaker, taught the second iteration of the flipped course in the Spring of 2017. Table 1 describes the participants' academic background, teaching experience and philosophy, and their views on technology.

Table 1

Participant Background

Instructors		Academic Profile
Raul (course coordinator & instructor)	-	**Academic background**: Doctorate in Spanish Linguistics and Second Language Acquisition
	-	**Teaching experience**: 8 yrs. Introductory Spanish (I & II), Intermediate Spanish (I & II), Business Spanish, Spanish Phonetics & Phonology
	-	**Teaching vision**: communicative focus, task-based approach, proficiency-based instruction
	-	**Technology vision**: optimization and individualization of learning
	-	**First language**: English
	-	**Spanish language experience**: living/teaching/travelling in Spain, Chile, Argentina & Costa Rica
Deborah (instructor)	-	**Academic background**: Master in Spanish Linguistics and Education. ACTFL Oral Proficiency Interview Tester Expertise
	-	**Teaching experience**: 20+ yrs. Introductory Spanish (I & II), Intermediate Spanish (I & II), 300-level bridge courses
	-	**Teaching vision**: communicative focus, authentic and real-life tasks, learners' confidence, personalized scaffolding
	-	**Technology vision**: optimization of instruction & development of authentic-like materials
	-	**First language**: Spanish
	-	**Spanish language experience**: living/teaching/travelling in Spain & Argentina

Course Redesign

The intermediate Spanish course was redesigned utilizing the flipped learning approach as the foundational platform upon which the principled communicative approach was integrated. All the direct and explicit instruction on grammatical, lexical and cultural explanations was delivered through online preparatory CALL tasks that students had to complete prior to class. The CALL tasks were created to prepare students with basic understanding of the Spanish language at the intermediate level and would require a time investment for the equivalent of one contact hour (50 minutes). The classroom space and time was for meaning-focus activities, communicative tasks, and peer work in order to reinforce the knowledge students gained in the online CALL tasks. The in-class communicative activities were oriented towards what learners can do with the language in contrast to what learners know about it, guided by the NCCSFL-ACTFL Can-Do Statements. The seating time for the in-class communicative activities was three times per week for 50 minutes each. Additionally, homework assignments were added to reinforce knowledge and practice of Spanish (Fig 1). Raul redesigned and taught the first iteration of the flipped course, while Deborah taught the second iteration. Course improvements were also made at the second iteration of the course.

Figure 1

Course Redesign
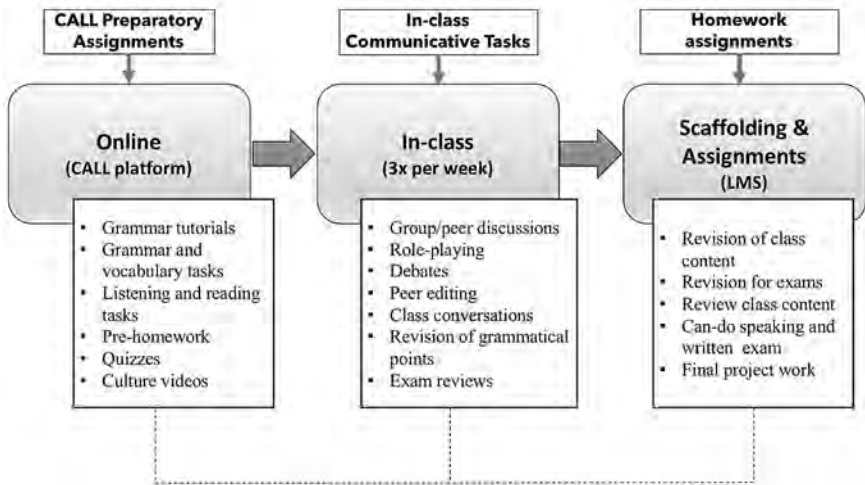
Researcher Positionality

     I identify myself as the author and researcher in this study. My role in this study was two-fold. First, I held the role of instructional designer, assisting the lead instructor in the redevelopment process of the course by providing instructional design and technology consultations during the planning and implementation stages. In this role, I guided the instructor in creating the blueprint of the flipped course, align the course outcomes to assessment and activities, and identify the CALL activities to be selected in the textbook platform and the ones to be created in the learning management system (LMS). I also assisted the second instructor in making adjustments for the second iteration of the course. Despite my own background and experience designing and teaching blended and online language courses, my responsibilities were oriented towards ongoing instructional design support and not content related. I regarded both instructors as the subject matter experts and myself as the learning design expert. I viewed this course redevelopment process as a partnership to achieve a common goal –provide students with a meaningful and communicative learning experience. Second, my professional interest in instructional design research and language teaching led me to conduct this research study with permission from the Institutional Review Board (#15429 & #16-582) and both instructors. Throughout the design and development stages (e.g., flipped learning course blueprint, creation of activities and assessments), I kept my role as course designer connected to of researcher, yet separate by focusing on specific tasks related to each role. The design and development meetings focused on instructional design work, whereas the interviews focused on gathering data to examine instructors' experiences.

Data Collection and Procedure

The data collected for this study included (1) pre- and post-course semi-structured interviews with instructors, (2) curriculum design documentation, (3) class observations, and (4) course evaluations. The main data sources were the interviews, design documents and class observations.

First, pre- and post-course semi-structured interview protocols (Appendices A and B) were created to collect rich and deeper insights from participants' experiences and reflections and explore their attitudes, actions, and feelings while designing, teaching, and evaluating the flipped CALL Spanish course. The semi-structured interviews were based on previous research on CALL evaluation (Chapelle, 2001; Jamieson & Chapelle, 2010), and blended learning (Gleason, 2013). These interviews had ten open-ended questions pertaining to the design phase (pedagogical-technological decision for the delivery of online and face-to-face content), teaching phase (instructional strategies for in-class communicative tasks), and the evaluation phase (perceived effectiveness and future improvements) (see Appendix A). The nature of the open-ended questions was intended to guide the researcher during the interview and respond to emerging topics from the participants' responses. Additionally, the post-course interview included a few questions drawn from the curriculum design documentation and class observations field notes (see Appendix B).

One-hour interviews for pre-course and post-course were conducted with each instructor. The pre-course interview with Raul took place during the planning semester (Summer of 2016), and the post-course interview was conducted after finals week in the Fall 2016. The pre-course interview with Deborah took place during finals week of the Fall 2016 before the second iteration of the course (offered in Spring 2017). Her post-course interview took place after finals week in Spring 2017.

The curriculum design documentation for the first iteration of the course included the initial course overview guidelines, an alignment matrix for course components, and the course syllabus and schedule. In my role as the instructional designer of the course, I annotated and summarized the specific details regarding the instructors' plans and decisions on the pedagogical and technological aspects of the course as discussed during our design and development meetings. This curriculum design documentation constituted the work-in-progress materials that were discussed and updated with Raul at the meetings throughout the design and implementation of the course. For the second iteration of the course, Raul suggested updates to several activities, including adding more specific expectations for homework assignments, revising the in-class communicative tasks, and varying the cultural topics. Deborah followed the suggestions and added clarifications to the syllabus about the nature of the flipped model, additional/supplemental grammar and vocabulary tasks, and in-class scaffolding of the online assignments.

Lastly, two class observations conducted in each iteration of the course and student course evaluations at the end of both course iterations were collected to examine positive aspects and further improvements of the flipped CALL course. The observation protocol included (1) context information about the class (e.g., course/section number, no. of students, time/day of observation), (2) in-class dynamics (e.g., activities, interactions, instructors' behavior/attitudes, instructional scaffolding, and (3) researcher's notes to capture my reflection after the observations.

Data Analysis

Both pre- and post-course interviews with each instructor were audio-recorded and later transcribed for analysis. The application NVivo 11.03 was used to conduct the analysis. A recurrent and iterative process of content analysis was conducted guided by the interview protocol questions in order to systematically examine ideas and patterns related to the questions in the data (Creswell, 2012; Elo & Kyngäs, 2008). These ideas were coded into categories, and later the categories were clustered into the following preliminary themes: (1) design experience, (2) reflection of the teaching experience, (3) evaluation, and (4) success and challenges. To ensure the accuracy and trustworthiness of the findings, the researcher used member-checking and triangulation of data sources (Fig. 2). Further, the researcher kept her neutrality position in regards to the instructors' perspectives by reframing from adding personal views or questioning the participants' insights to assure a successful interview process (Merriam, 2009).

Figure 2

Triangulation of Data Sources
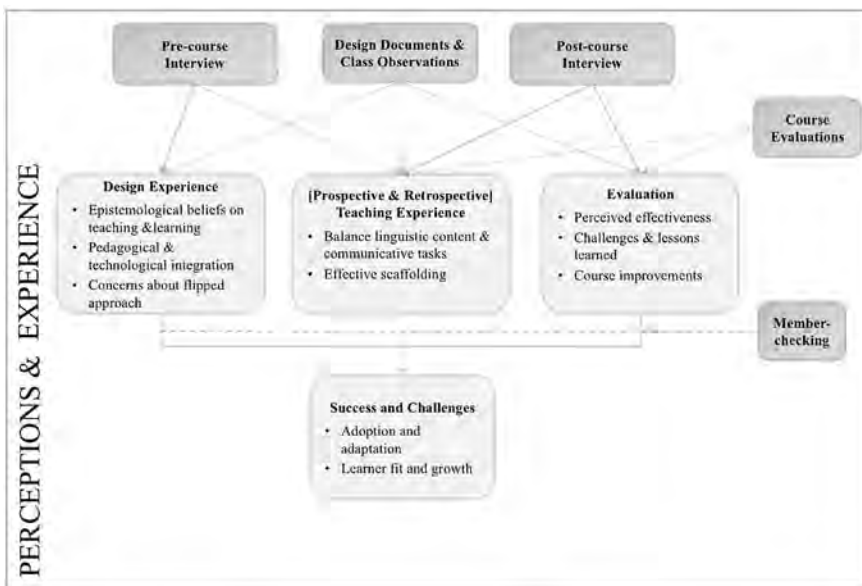
Findings

Overall, the findings suggest that the instructors considered the course redevelopment a successful implementation of the flipped CALL based on the design, teaching, and evaluation of the course. Table 2 presents a summary of the categories and themes.

Table 2

Summary of Categories and Themes from the Interviews

Categories	Themes
Design	• epistemological beliefs about teaching and learning, • pedagogical and technological integration, • concerns
Teaching	• balancing linguistic content and communicative tasks, • effective scaffolding
Evaluation	• perceived effectiveness, • challenges and lessons learned, • course improvements
Success and Challenges	• adoption and adaptation, • learner fit and growth

Design Experience

Instructors' perceptions and experiences related to (1) epistemological beliefs about teaching and learning, (2) pedagogical and technological integration, and (3) concerns. First, instructors' epistemological beliefs deeply rooted in communicative approaches to language learning, where they facilitated learning opportunities and constant scaffolding. These beliefs were also connected to their own experiences learning another language. Raul a native speaker of English learned Spanish and travelled to several Spanish-speaking countries. In contrast, Deborah, a native speaker of Spanish, learned English as a foreign language in her homecountry, and later as a second language in the U.S. Raul indicated that "[s]econd language acquisition research has demonstrated that [communicative and] interactive activities are the engine of language development insofar as they encourage students to notice the gap between their production and a more appropriate rendition" (Raul, pre). Similarly, Deborah considered communication as the key for language development. She placed greater emphasis on effective and just-in-time feedback. She indicated that "[students] will do [activities] with a partner, and I always check their answers… I don't want them to be talking to each other without anybody checking if they are doing it properly" (Deborah, pre). For both Raul and Deborah, a communicative approach guided how they created learning activities.

For Raul pedagogical and technological integration was at the forefront of the design process, while for Deborah, this integration was less of a concern. Raul's view of the role of technology drove him to select the flipped learning model to "restructure the curriculum to take advantage of the two modes of instruction: online, individualized, and input-base preparatory work that provides immediate feedback; and face-to-face, interactive, proficiency-oriented activities whose goal is comprehensible communication" (Raul, pre). For Raul, re-conceptualizing the learning spaces provided a venue for CALL instruction that "is individualized and adaptive with systematic and more robust feedback" (Raul, post). However, for Deborah, pedagogical strategies were a priority. Her major focus revolved around the activities that

students would do in the classroom as she mentioned that "[creating] and using a lot of activities from the book, interactive ones, and then I kind of modify some of them that I think are 'boring' and so I just modify [them]" (Deborah, pre).

Although Raul and Deborah reported several concerns during their course re-designs, Raul, being the language coordinator in addition to his role as lead instructor, had concerns about administrative constraints related to "[organizing] the course in a way that's intuitive and makes sense and is transparent for everyone involved, because we have a lot of different components and resources" (Raul, post). Deborah, in contrast, indicated her concern about creating a welcoming learning environment that also challenged students in the use of Spanish. She shared that her biggest challenge was to create an environment that was "inviting even for the shy students, and it's not easy… So we just [need to make] sure that you don't put them on the spot, but motivate them to participate" (Deborah, post).

Teaching Experience

The themes that were identified in the data related to (1) balancing linguistic content and communicative tasks, and (2) effective scaffolding. First, in implementing the flipped learning model, Raul sought to reach a balance between the linguistic content (e.g., grammar, vocabulary) and communicative tasks (e.g., content topics, cultural aspects) as he mentioned that learners would have "scaffolded preparation before class, to use class time for truly communicative task-driven activities. I don't want instructors, myself included, spending time in class going over basic vocabulary words in a sort of drill and kill, call and repeat format. I don't want grammar taught that way" (Raul, pre). Raul targeted different language skills through the CALL content where every lesson began with vocabulary and grammar followed by the sequence of the book content. Whereas in class, Raul focused on extensive use of Spanish for conversations and activation of prior knowledge. The first activity in his class was always a conversation activity 'a conversar' [time to talk] that integrated the vocab and grammar of the chapter. Raul highlighted that "that's our task, the grammar is supporting that" (Raul, post).

Raul's focus was on communication rather than on attaining accuracy of grammatical structures. He exemplified this by explaining that some real-life situations do not require specific grammatical structures and therefore "[c]ommunicatively, does it accomplish the same thing? Yes. That's acceptable for me. If I'm only going to accept the subjunctive, the target grammar structure, then I'm teaching a grammatical syllabus. There's nothing communicative about that. There's nothing task-based" (post).

Deborah, in contrast, promoted critical thinking about real issues and had students use the vocabulary from the chapter first, then adapt it to their own contexts and realities. She used several activities from the textbook "because it's more in the box" (post). Then, she would aim at having students "[think] just outside the box in the second language" (post) by making connections between activities and their own situations during "next class when they feel more comfortable, we talk for five or ten minutes as an icebreaker. It's more related to the class before" (post). Deborah also explained that fully communicative tasks would not always work well because students struggled with understanding and using advanced structures in meaning-oriented activities (e.g., subjunctive). Sometimes she selected "mechanical and bor-

ing" activities from the textbook for learners to practice more the use of specific grammar. She said that "I just try to make them feel like they can carry a conversation. It's not just in a box. It's a process. Sometimes things don't work out the way I expect" (post). Observations from field notes confirmed that both instructors regularly implemented task-oriented activities to push students to use Spanish to communicate in the classroom (e.g., discussing topics on democracy, foreign cultures).

Raul and Deborah believed that providing effective scaffolding through just-in-time support during the in-classroom tasks was crucial for learners' deeper understanding of the uses and nuances of Spanish in communicative activities. Raul "want[ed] [students] to acquire a more sophisticated way of saying it, I recommend that you do x, y, and z versus you need to do ... That's different. I always model[ed] that" (post). Raul modeled real uses of Spanish by adapting a real and authentic activity to his own students' needs. He mentioned that his class activities were always "scaffolded. I'm modeling, they're getting input, they're doing controlled output, more spontaneous output, guided uses of the language" (post). Similarly, Deborah's teaching approach promoted the use of Spanish in a safe and non-threatening environment with peer and instructor scaffolding. She, being a language learner herself, pointed out how she was conscientious "of not making [students] feel like they can't do it just because they are mispronouncing or because they are not getting it right" (post). She also mentioned that learners engaged in mutual scaffolding and feedback, and she also provided individualized feedback by communicating and pointing areas of improvement on a one-on-one basis whenever possible.

Evaluation Phase

The themes related to the evaluation phase include (1) perceived effectiveness, (2) challenges and lessons learned, and (3) course improvements. First, Raul's and Deborah's different experiences shaped their perception of the effectiveness of the flipped approach. Overall, for Raul, the flipped course was successful because the course objectives to engage students in communicative, proficiency-oriented, and interactive language tasks were met and the structure of the course facilitated learning in a more reasonable way. Raul pointed out that the change was about "re-conceptualizing expectations around the course, both for instructors and for [students] and for the department as a whole, to say, this is intermediate level, intermediate mid at the highest, what are the expectations, what is reasonable?" (post). Raul believed that learners were much more prepared to participate in the communicative tasks during class because he noticed "[students] weren't floundering ever. In group work they were ready, they had things to say, they seemed much more prepared to me. It was a much more pleasant experience for me as well" (post). For Raul, it was better to create more communicative activities based on students' needs and on the expected outcomes.

Likewise, Deborah believed that the flipped format was effective in preparing students out-of-class and achieving communicative outcomes. She indicated that "[students] prepared at home and when they came to class, they could make more connections, they could discuss more topics with their classmates. I think they activated [a different system]" (post). Furthermore, she argued that support and scaffolding throughout the activities helped students achieve their learning goals. For her, the success of the flipped learning involved academic as well as emotional

support to students. With increased opportunities to use Spanish for communicative purposes "students potentially developed their fluency in Spanish, otherwise we wouldn't be able to do that" (post). Flipped learning through the online CALL preparatory assignments gave students "the tools and the resources to come to class prepared, and it allowed me more class time to do communicative activities" (post).

Second, both instructors faced challenges at the micro and macro level and had lessons learned throughout the flipped course. Raul, as the language coordinator, faced challenges in reconceptualizing the design of a single course and the way the entire curriculum could be affected. In the single course, Raul focused on facilitating tasks for students to engage in communicative tasks during class. However, at times he attempted to do "the very nitty-gritty grammar exercises in the textbook, it was a disaster… it didn't fit with the course… Students just didn't know what to do with it because all of a sudden there's no communication, just a grammar exercise" (pre). Another challenge for Raul was the use of the LMS for developing a logical structure of the course. Despite his 7-year experience with the LMS, Raul believed that "it [was] not all intuitive, which means that I have to do everything myself" (pre). Raul commented that he did not enjoy using the LMS because "I find that I spend countless hours just sitting there, clicking, answering emails from instructors about things that should be intuitive but aren't" (pre). Raul used the LMS as a gateway to access the online CALL platform Connect/LearnSmart which as was more intuitive and easier to use.

Besides this, Raul faced a challenge while envisioning the redesign of the course as part of an integrated series of courses within the entire curriculum. According to Raul, the department had requirements for one or two semesters of language instruction with more serious students coming to study. These students wanted to achieve a real communicative competence in Spanish, starting at a lower 200-level course. Raul pointed out that his challenge involved re-thinking the curriculum structure because "you can't just re-design a course. In a way, you have to mentally re-design every course in the curriculum or think okay, two years from now, how is this going to affect [other courses]?" (pre).

Deborah faced challenges related mostly to her single course. In the classroom, she promoted substantial interaction and communication, "challenging [students], 'Okay, we know you mastered this skill in Connect. Let's just do something else. Let's just challenge you. Now, it's your turn to create" (pre). However, Deborah wished the activities were "all real life… You have to nail that grammar concept or that vocab before they can apply it" (post). Deborah also realized that to create an inviting learning environment where students felt confident and less anxious to speak in Spanish, she needed to "educate [herself] and [develop] more activities, how to use different activities to engage students" (pre). She also realized that "keeping up with social media, or activities [students] engaged in, or just bring more things that are relevant to their lives in the classroom" (pre) would be necessary to achieve a more engaging and lively class environment. For Deborah, teaching the flipped course was hard because "[she was] trying to make the class relevant and also teach the grammar and the vocab…so it's not that easy" (post).

For Deborah, technology in the flipped model required time and skills for instructors and learners if the model were to be integrated throughout the program.

Deborah wondered about the difficulty of integrating technology in the flipped model because of the perceived need for "[making] this technology available if they are going to be required to use it in the classroom? How do you manage that? How much time do you want students to be learning how to use the technology? You have to be realistic" (post). She believed that coordination with the entire program would facilitate a better integration of the technology within the flipped model. She illustrated her perspective in the following comment, "unless we all coordinate within the program.... you teach the students to use the technology in [lower levels] and then the same technology is going to be used in each semester with a different project" (post). This seemed to be a good time investment as it was expected that students would be using the same CALL technology semester after semester.

Third, Raul and Deborah considered changing several of the CALL activities to provide students with additional practice of linguistic knowledge as well as more grammar and vocabulary focused tasks. In particular, Raul planned to improve the writing component "to make that truly communicative, not just dress it up in communicative clothing" (post). He also planned to re-structure how to handle speaking tasks in a more efficient way.

Deborah realized that seating time was a crucial aspect in the flipped course to extend the opportunities students had for speaking in Spanish and developing their fluency. She proposed to "add another day instead of three, four days a week. I would add a little bit more exercises to come prepared" (post). Deborah thought of increasing the types of activities in class to foster more speaking practice by "maybe having once a week, some kind of [activity], giving them a prompt for them to speak for two minutes more often" (post).

By the second iteration of the flipped Intermediate Spanish course, Raul had already decided to integrate the approach into the curriculum by moving the entire program to the flipped model. However, in Raul's' words, this was a "work-in-progress with much more to improve to help students meet the learning outcomes" (post).

Success and Challenges

Themes included (1) adoption and adaptation, and (2) learner fit and growth. First, Raul and Deborah considered the need to shift to a more communicative approach if they wanted students to fulfill the goals of learning and using Spanish for functional and communicative purposes. Raul argued that the adoption of the flipped approach allowed him to "optimize class time for communicative interactive practice driven by the can-do model, and our own internal departmental standards for where we want our students to be and maintain, nonetheless, an accuracy component" (post).

Implementing the flipped model called for a quest on more effective resources for online and in-class work. For Raul, the analysis of the course evaluation in previous semesters indicated that the "[hybrid] model was not working well and the textbooks lacked communicative activities and connection of topics" (pre). Additionally, "some online collaborative tools that [we used] … the university stopped supporting, that were expensive and we couldn't require students to buy that" (pre). The CALL platforms previously used had "limited functionality… for example, just error detection, so all or nothing grading…to expect [students] to get accents right all the time is absurd" (pre). These challenges required a radical change to envision learning outcomes more realistically and integrate the technology as a means for more

individualized learning. He argued that technology was adaptive and had reached a point where adaptive dynamic systems could help in implementing performance indicators and benchmarks in a tailored experience.

In turn, Deborah argued that language learning does not seek perfection, but considering that it is a learning process, she emphatically commented that "if you are looking for perfection in everything that [students] say, the flipped classroom approach is the wrong approach" (post). For Deborah, a vision of language learning within the flipped approach had to come with "a change of mentality. What are you looking for? The flipped, I think it's perfect for the communicative focus" (post).

Second, for Raul and Deborah, the flipped model involved beyond mere re-conceptualization of the learning spaces and re-definition of what takes place inside the classroom. It further involved learner fit and growth. Raul highlighted the difficulty of getting students "to shift to that mentality because a lot of language training is about native performance on some level" (pre). Because students are so much focused on getting perfect structural accuracy, they might not see value in "[evaluating] them on the comprehensibility of their message, on their ability to communicate something meaningful in the language on a given topic" (post). For Raul, flipped learning related to performance-driven model of assessment and curricular design, where communication was the backbone of the curriculum without leaving grammatical accuracy aside. He did not want to leave the impression that accuracy did not matter, but he wanted to give students "license to make mistakes and say, at this level you should really be able to produce sentences, isolated sentences" (pre). In this sense, Raul was aiming to have learners acquire not only the language, but also to become autonomous in their learning and "start those skills early on in a very safe, controlled environment" (post). For Raul, it was important that by implementing the flipped model students "assess themselves, the ability to set goals for themselves, the ability to manage their time, to synthesize information, and thinking critically, that's that cross-cultural component always, the X culture is very different from our own, etc." (pre).

Contrastively, Deborah pointed out that the flipped model might not suit every student because the demands and responsibilities for autonomous learning are greater and "not everybody is ready to study the grammar on their own. It takes a very dedicated student" (post). According to Deborah, some students were used to having all the concepts explained to them, "being lectured, instead of studying on their own" (pre). Some students struggled with the new model, while others exercised the freedom to study on their own and then apply the new concepts. She perceived that "[students] are so used to having their teacher explain from zero. Do they get use to the flipped? Yes, they do, but it's a shock for some of them at the beginning" (post). Deborah argued that the flipped model promoted "that freedom, that independence… and it takes a very responsible student… who is more organized because they need to dedicate that time that they are not in class to study at home. I think it takes some specific kind of learner" (post).

Discussion

This case study examined instructors' experiences and perspectives in the process of designing, teaching, and evaluating the Spanish flipped course. Overall, both instructors demonstrated a positive, yet challenging experience throughout the pro-

cess, underscoring critical aspects that contributed to and hindered the success of the flipped model. For instance, a clear and focused rationale for adopting the flipped model needs to consider the scope and sequence of the course within the curriculum as well as the necessary support to students. Raul and Deborah had taken a shift in their mindsets by seeking alternative approaches to leverage CALL and promote a more constructivist learning environment that allowed learners to engage in practical experiences (Lee & Dashew, 2011) and communicative and engaging tasks hypothesized to be key for language development (Chapelle, 2009; Nunan, 2004).

This case study provides insights into the change of mindsets that instructors need to have to move from a techno-centric view of technology to a more pedagogical and theoretical view of the conditions needed for language learning and development and the ways that technology affects language use (Chun et al., 2016). The belief system that Raul and Deborah had about language teaching and learning influenced their pedagogical practice leading them to seek alternative approaches to combine form and meaning in CALL and in-class tasks. Both instructors believed that delivering CALL tasks online was more effective to build learners' declarative knowledge of Spanish through input-rich activities where they could notice linguistic features of the language and be able to map the connections between form and meaning (Chapelle, 2009). Additionally, the flexibility of access to CALL tasks at one's own time and pace, facilitated revision of content as needed and reinforced knowledge and practice.

The instructors' experiences contributed to an ongoing change of mindsets where they acknowledged the need for themselves and for students to step out of their comfort zones and think more creatively about the ways that old and new technologies can shape the language learning processes (Chun et al., 2016). This relates to existing research that suggests that the flipped learning model can foster digital literacy (Webb & Doman, 2020). This case study illustrates that theoretical principles on language pedagogy can be applied based on whether these meet teachers' mindsets and beliefs (Mowlaie & Rahimi, 2010), and the need to mindfully select activities for the online as well as for the face-to-face learning spaces, which in turn, shapes the dynamics of the course (Bonakdarian et. al., 2009).

Raul and Deborah both struggled when adapting and creating activities that, on the one hand, promoted active peer and group communication and interaction, and on the other hand, targeted specific grammar structures. Despite using task-based activities that challenged students further in their linguistic knowledge and language development, not everything in the flipped course was as effective as expected. Other studies had reported, learners' concerns about having to study grammar on their own and lacking instructor direct and explicit instruction (Chen Hsieh et al., 2016; Egbert et al., 2014; Hernández-Nanclares & Pérez-Rodríguez, 2016). Other studies on flipped language learning environments have also found that not all students can benefit from these environments due to the self-regulation behaviors needed (Chuang et al., 2018). Thus, instructors should include supportive strategies for students to cope with the demands of the learning approach including self-regulation (e.g., goal setting, self-monitoring), time management, and problem-solving.

The findings of this case study also suggest that the effectiveness of the flipped model depends on a clear understanding of the learning outcomes, conditions for ef-

fective second-language acquisition, and reconceptualization of the learning spaces. In this regard, the implementation of the flipped model for language learning has implications for the design of CALL tasks and materials (Chapelle 2009, 2017; Kern, 2006; Levy et al., 2015), the role of the instructor in assisting learners in their language learning performance and interaction (Hubbard, 2011), the needs, characteristics and interest of learners (Oxford & Oxford, 2009), and the development of digital literacy (Webb & Doman, 2020).

The findings show that for Raul and Deborah, the clear end goal involved performance-based communicative use of the language. The flipped course was overall sustained through communicative tasks that maximized learners' exposure to meaningful input that, along with the linguistic resources they had at hand, was used to accomplish learners' communicative and functional goals. In other words, learners built up their explicit knowledge of the language through the learning process and implicit knowledge they gained while communicating meaningfully, as opposed to learning the language with the present-practice-produce instruction (Nunan, 2004; Van den Branden, 2016). Thus, this case study suggests that the flipped learning approach can facilitate task-based instruction with opportunities to integrate tasks and technology.

Conclusion

Through examining instructors' experiences and perceptions of the flipped course, this case study illustrates the complexity of integrating pedagogical approaches, communicative tasks, and technological resources. With careful design, instructors can design a flipped language course that can transform the classroom into a highly dynamic and communicative space where learners interact among themselves and with the instructor using the target language (Collins et al., 2012; Hung, 2015; Shyr & Chen, 2018). While pedagogical principles may remain stable, technology evolves drastically requiring instructors to constantly evaluate the affordances of the new technologies to fit their pedagogical practices.

Although researchers argue that implementing flipped learning pertains to what happens in the classroom in terms of active learning strategies (Betihavas et al., 2016), this case study suggests that the online CALL and the face-to-face learning spaces as well as the activities that allow students move seamlessly between these spaces can impact the success of the learning experience. The "choice and combination of technologies [depended] on [the] overall goals and pedagogical approach" (Chun et al., 2016, p. 74). While improvements to the flipped CALL model still develop, this case study contributes to understand instructors' perspectives and epistemological beliefs while adopting more student-centered learning.

This case study brings some limitations and offers directions for further research. First, the participants' predispositions to the pedagogical model might influence their expectations and perceptions. Second, two instructors from the Spanish language program participated in the study, limiting a broader understanding of the experience across instructors and courses in the entire program. Further research should examine how instructors' make instructional choices that determine which types of CALL and in-class tasks are implemented. Research should also investigate the systems of support and skills for instructors to effectively develop a flipped learning model.

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Appendix A

Pre-Course Interview

1. Could you share what prompted you to consider the flipped approach to redevelop your Spanish courses?

2. Could you describe your philosophy for language teaching and how it guides your choice of teaching strategies?

3. How does your teaching philosophy connect to the underlying framework of the flipped format for which some content goes online and communicative activities happen in the classroom?

4. How do you envision designing the flipped courses?

5. What components of the course and content would you develop for the online space and which ones for the classroom?

6. What kind of activities would you leverage in the classroom?

7. What kind of preparation do you believe students will need to engage in highly-communicative activities in the classroom?

8. How would you initiate the redesign of the course with the flipped format?

9. How would you get students feedback on what works for them and what needs improvement in the flipped format?

10. Do you have any concerns about going into this design?

Appendix B

Post-Course Interview

1. Could you share your overall teaching experience in this flipped format?

2. How do you see the value of having the students come prepared with the grammatical points, the vocabulary, and even reading some aspects about their culture? How does that add to what you do in the classroom?

3. When you think about all these activities that you do with the students in the class, how close are those activities to real life activities like what native speakers of Spanish would be doing?

4. How do you perceive your students' reactions to what they do in connect? Do they like? Do they feel overwhelmed?

5. What are the accomplishments that you have seen in the course and what have been the challenges that you have seen in the course in this flipped format?

6. Do you think that this format somehow has some impact on how a student proceeds with their own learning strategies?

7. From my observations, I noticed that in a couple of classes you had to basically explain the grammar points. Why was that? Do you feel that it was necessary? What happened?

8. How do you connect culture topics to the class because my understanding is that these topics are hard to understand.

9. If you are going to do this course again, if you are going to teach this course again in the flipped format, what would you do differently? Or what would you add or take out of the course?

10. What is your personal reflection on the whole experience teaching in this flipped format?