

THE EFFECTS OF A FLIPPED CLASSROOM ON STUDENT COMPREHENSION AND
PERCEPTION AMONG SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNERS IN A BACHELOR OF
SOCIAL WORK COURSE

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Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of Doctor of Education in

Curriculum and Instruction

College of Education

University of South Carolina

2018

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my husband, Rick, and my two wonderful children, Rich and Leslie. Your love and support makes all things possible.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank and acknowledge the following people who provided support and assistance throughout this dissertation journey. First to my doctoral committee chair and advisor, Dr. Christopher Bogiages, who was a consistent source of guidance, wisdom and support. I would also like to thank the members of my committee, Dr. Suha Tamim, Dr. Rhonda Jeffries, and Dr. Cathy Brant for your insights and guidance.

My thanks and indebtedness to Mrs. Nawal Majeed, who provided translations during student interviews as well as a review of my work. Your kindness, generosity, and insights were invaluable. My thanks also to Dr. Matthew Robby, Dr. Sinead Eccles, Mr. Hakem Al-Nasser and Dr. Riaz Akseer who all provided guidance and support of my research at different points in the process.

My appreciation also to faculty and students who shared their thoughts and experiences and participated in this study. A special thanks to my students, both past and present, who are a constant source of inspiration for me. Thank you for the privilege of teaching and learning from you.

Finally, to my family who make all things possible, my husband, Rick, my children, Rich and Leslie, and my parents, Harvey and Anne Neufeldt. A final thank-you to my father, Dr. Harvey Neufeldt, who instilled in me a lifelong quest for learning.

ABSTRACT

This two phased action research study first explored obstacles to learning among second-language learners in a UAE undergraduate, social work course. This knowledge was then used in the modification of a flipped class approach to understand how this approach could influence student engagement and comprehension. This study was grounded in a sociocultural and student-centered learning theoretical framework, through first exploring the sociocultural influences and obstacles within a specific cultural context and modifying a student-centered learning approach based on this knowledge. Both phases were studied using a qualitative, ethnographic design.

Phase I sought to answer the following research questions: What are the obstacles to learning identified by native-Arabic, female English language learners? What are the obstacles to learning and teaching as noted by faculty who teach native-Arabic, female English language learners? Data was collected through a faculty open-question survey, a faculty focus group, and interviews with five students who later participated in the flipped class. Data was analyzed using qualitative methods of thematic analysis. Findings from Phase I indicated differing expectations between instructors and students of what teaching and learning should be. These expectations intersected with a second-language learning environment, and resulted in consistent teaching and learning challenges. The knowledge gained from Phase I informed Phase II and the implementation of a flipped class. Phase II sought to answer the following research subquestions: How can a flipped class pedagogy be used to support comprehension and engagement among native-Arabic,

English language learners in an undergraduate social work course? How can a flipped classroom pedagogy provide faculty who are non-Arabic speakers opportunities to support native-Arabic, English language learners? Data was collected through field notes, audio transcriptions, a research journal, content analysis of exam responses, and post flipped-class student interviews. Data was again analyzed using qualitative methods. Findings of Phase II indicated that culturally relevant knowledge could be incorporated in a flipped class model. Behavioral engagement improved, as well as comprehension and application among students performing at the lower end of the class.

Key Words: English language learners, second-language learners, flipped class, engagement, comprehension

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Problems encountered in second-language learning and instructional environments cannot be fully understood without considering the specific context and culture in which the learning takes place (Goodwin, 2013). Indeed, Bashir-Ali (2011) argues that “all teaching and learning are socially situated” (p. 106) and cannot be divorced from the context in which the learning takes place. Obstacles to learning could occur not only due to language differences but also due to differing cultural perspectives of students and teachers (Al Issa, 2005; Goodwin, 2013; Polleck & Shabdin, 2013). These differences can create problems in classroom engagement and comprehension of material.

The flipped classroom is a teaching approach that has gained popularity in Western countries, i.e., North American and western European countries (Filatova, 2015; Joanne & Lateef, 2014). With increased opportunities for student-centered learning and support from the surge of worldwide mobile technology, for many instructors it has become the answer to disengagement and poor achievement in the classroom (Hamdan, McKnight, McKnight, & Arfstrom, 2013). A flipped classroom typically involves the use of technology to deliver course content or a class lecture outside the classroom, usually through electronic means, so that class time can be spent on practical application or active-learning activities (Zainuddin & Halil, 2016). Homework and other learning

activities are done in the classroom while the traditional lectures or content are watched outside of class. Research, however, is limited in regard to the flipped classroom's applicability with second-language learners in general, as well as second-language learners from Eastern countries, such as Arab countries (Al Issa, 2005; Joanne & Lateef, 2014). As Jackson (2015) warns, "exportation of any kind of student-centered learning in diverse societies and regions is likely to yield unexpected results" (p. 761). Considered another way, any teaching strategy used to address obstacles to learning must consider cultural preferences and perceptions (Hatcher, 2008; McFeeters, 2003). This study attempted to understand obstacles to learning and teaching among second-language learners in a UAE undergraduate social work class and consider how a flipped class approach could be used and contextualized to address these obstacles.

Background: United Arab Emirates

In the span of less than 50 years the United Arab Emirates has become one of the richest countries in the world and uses a small portion of its wealth to provide free higher education to its citizens, Emiratis (Madsen, 2009). Although Emiratis make up less than 20% of the total UAE population, the government hopes to replace expatriate labor with an Emirati workforce through a process called Emiratization (Aswad, Vidican, & Samulewicz, 2011a; Walters, Quinn, & Walters, 2003). This is due, in part, to governmental concerns about unemployment among native Emiratis and the desire to decrease dependence on expatriate labor (Toledo, 2011).

With governmental expectations that they will find employment upon graduation, students are entering higher education at increased rates. According to Sherif (2013), 13,000 Emirati college graduates enter the labor force annually, and in the next ten years

this number will climb to 200,000 (Daleure, Albon, Hinkston, Ajaif, & McGeown, 2014). Thus, the need for competency-based education or an education in which students are able to demonstrate critical-thinking skills, solve problems, and perform other marketable skills remains strong (Madsen, 2009). Yet the 2012 unemployment rate among UAE nationals has increased to nearly 12%, and UAE national women in particular have a low 28% workforce participation rate, even though they are more likely to be educated at the tertiary level (Aswad, Vidican, & Samulewicz, 2011a; Sherif, 2013). Low female workforce participation is due in part to cultural influences and strict gender roles. For Emirati women, family obligations will come first, before school or employment responsibilities (Daleure, Albon, Hinkston, et al., 2014; Lambert, 2008).

Yet additional reasons for graduate unemployment may include graduates from UAE schools and universities who are lacking requisite skills needed by the job market when compared with expatriate workers (Sherif, 2013). Private employers continue to show preference in hiring expatriate workers who they believe are more experienced, have the necessary skills, are more qualified, and are less expensive to employ (Aswad et al., 2011a; Daleure, Albon, & Hinkston, 2014). Compounding this problem are saturated public services where many Emiratis prefer to work (Daleure, Albon, & Hinkston, 2014). As Sherif (2013) explains, basic and tertiary education have not been able to provide sufficient education to meet labor market demands. Samman (2003) concurs, stating that the main cause of skill deficits among Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries, including Oman, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Kuwait, and UAE, is quality of education issues.

Quality of education problems begin early and include primary and secondary school environments, pedagogical approaches, and teacher preparedness. Emirati students

entering college or university often arrive unprepared for college (Rinderman, Baumiester, & Gröper, 2014). Reasons for this include educational deficiencies that occur in primary and secondary schools and include dependence on rote learning methods, teacher-centered curricula, teacher training issues, curriculum and teaching that rely solely on textbooks, and lower educational levels of parents (Farah & Ridge, 2009; Madsen, 2009; Rinderman, Baumiester, & Gröper, 2014; Samman, 2003). The primary teaching method may have been memorization of material instead of building a connection with what is being learned, encouraging creativity or personal responsibility, and acquiring time management skills (Madsen, 2009; Rinderman et al., Samman, 2003; 2014; Vassall-Fall, 2011). Crabtree (2010) goes further to describe the UAE state education system as didactic, and dominated by the teacher. As Farah and Ridge (2009) argue, UAE pedagogical approaches need to move beyond the transmission of knowledge to include other approaches and techniques. However, compounding this issue are cultural traditions for this more didactic approach that could limit participatory teaching methods (Veeran, 2013; Shukri, 2014).

Additionally, students arrive to higher education institutions with weak English skills, yet English is so dominant in the UAE tertiary sector; it is almost impossible to find any college or university in Dubai that teaches in Arabic, and English remains the language most often used by UAE tertiary institutions (Gallagher, 2011). English is viewed as essential in the UAE, but an added issue described by Gallagher (2011) is the “linguistic distance between Arabic and English” (p.4), such as radically different script and opposite page orientation, reading and writing left to right, which makes learning English particularly challenging for Emirati students.

The combination of these issues forms educational deficits that can follow students from primary and secondary school to technical college or university and on into the workforce. A 2013 World Economic Forum Report stated that graduates of Middle Eastern higher education institutions, including those in Qatar and UAE, did not have the competencies needed by employers to include adequate English language skills, oral and written communication abilities, and skills of critical thinking (Arab News, 2013). And while Ashour and Fatima (2016) describe the UAE's strong commitment to education and robust system of higher education, they also suggest that the skills graduates obtain may not be sufficient to meet the needs of a knowledge-based economy.

Background: College, Program, and Students

These are problems mirrored, at times, in a UAE bachelor of social work program. The college system is made up of different colleges spread throughout the seven emirates that comprise the UAE. It offers a variety of applied bachelor diplomas as well as applied diplomas and certificates that emphasize technical and workforce-preparedness skills. Workforce preparedness is a primary goal of the college system, and student-centered learning approaches are increasingly emphasized as ways to provide students with needed workforce training. All students attending the college are Emirati Nationals, and as stated, all Emirati Nationals receive free education at the tertiary level (Toledo, 2013).

The social work program is currently offered at two women's campuses in two different emirates. The UAE is an Islamic society, and in keeping with Islamic culture and values, males and females are separated and attend different college campuses.

The program is small with less than 200 students, all female and all Emirati nationals. While most UAE national women continue to live in “traditional communities and extended families guided heavily by custom and Islam,” these traditions are not necessarily opposed to higher education (Samier, 2015, p. 243). The UAE society supports and encourages women to pursue post-secondary education (Hassane, McClam, & Woodside, 2009). Women’s higher educational attainment in the GCC is on par with Western countries, and in some Emirates 50% of all college students are women, with women in the majority to graduate at the tertiary level (Aswad et al., 2011b; Marmenout & Lirio, 2014; Samier, 2015).

Background: National Qualifications Framework

More recently, the college has initiated the process of aligning its programs with the UAE National Qualifications Framework (NQF) or *QF Emirates* (QFE), which is a framework that aligns educational programs with workplace needs and standards (NQA, n.d.). This alignment mandates competency-based education and emphasizes the importance of knowledge, skill, and competency acquisition among Emirati Nationals as part of the country’s emiratization efforts (NQA, n.d.). Persons are awarded diplomas on the basis of specific outcomes defined by the NQF as “what a person with an award knows, can do and understands” (NQA, n.d.), rather than the amount of time spent in a program. The NQF, like other international frameworks, uses a taxonomic approach in which programs align their program outcomes, course outcomes, and assessment strategies with the level of qualification such as a bachelor’s degree qualification (AQF, 2013). Outcomes must indicate adequate levels of complexity based upon the particular qualification.

The NQF can be conceptualized as a way to regulate qualifications and provide assurances to employers that students have obtained the necessary knowledge, skills, and competence for their particular level of qualification or degree (Ashour & Fatima, 2016).

Problem in Practice

The problem in practice this dissertation sought to address was issues with comprehension of and engagement with an *English-based*, undergraduate social work course among native-Arabic, second-language learners.

As future UAE social workers, graduates are expected to communicate, assess, and counsel effectively in both Arabic and English since they will be working with both expatriate and local populations. Additionally, they are expected to demonstrate good writing skills, critical thinking skills, and problem-solving abilities or, as Altshuler and Bosch (2003) suggest, become “professional problem solvers” (p. 202). Garthwait (2015) adds that social work requires cognitive abilities to use theoretical and empirical knowledge to analyze client needs and interventions. In other words, social work graduates must be able to apply theory to practice situations and use critical thinking skills to assess problems and select interventions (Garthwait, 2015; Sage & Sele, 2015).

However, problems of both weak English skills and cultural contextualization can hamper the ability of students to gain necessary knowledge and skills. Social work curricula in the UAE, for example, are taught mostly in English (Crabtree, 2008). Although there are social work faculty who are bilingual and first-language Arabic speakers, all textbooks and materials are in English. Use of social work English teaching materials are the norm in Arab Gulf countries, because as Sloan, Bromfield, Matthews and Rotabi (2017) emphasize, as recently as 2016, due to a lack of local social work

instructional materials, mostly British or American textbooks are used. Thus, students do need effective English communication and writing skills and critical thinking skills to learn, comprehend, and apply course concepts in the classroom and in practice settings. Instruction, on the other hand, needs to be delivered at a level where students do not become overwhelmed by concepts they may not have the language skills to understand (Feledichuck & Wong, 2014).

Additional concerns include student engagement with the social work curriculum and, at times, the fit between social work curriculum and Arab-Islamic culture. While “many of Islam’s core values and purposes are largely congruent with the mission, vision, and core values of the social work profession” (Sloan et al., 2017, p. 200), there still exists an incongruous fit, at times, between a social work curriculum and the context in which it exists. Social work is heavily influenced by Western ideals and scholarship and may not adequately integrate with collective cultural traditions, such as how social problems are conceptualized and addressed in Islamic countries like the UAE (Samier, 2015; Sloan et al., 2017; Veeran, 2013). Other issues include avoiding topics that are considered culturally inappropriate to talk about, which can lead to deficits in student skill acquisition (Crabtree, 2008). This lack of cultural contextualization of social work can negatively influence both student engagement with the social work curriculum and student attainment of requisite knowledge and competencies (Crabtree, 2008; Hassane et al., 2009; Veeran, 2013).

Pedagogical challenges, therefore, include both assisting students with comprehension of an English-based curriculum as well as engagement or connection with

the material, both of which can create problems for students in understanding concepts and linking theory to practice.

Rationale and Purpose for the Study

When considering any pedagogical approach, an understanding of the context's specific obstacles to learning encountered by both students and faculty provides necessary information to assist learners in making connections to their learning. How do students and faculty experience and perceive obstacles in the teaching and learning environment? What are the unique second-language and cultural challenges of a given teaching environment? This information provides a necessary foundation from which to develop or modify a pedagogical approach, such as a flipped classroom.

The flipped classroom approach is an approach that can be adapted and modified to specific contexts (Filatova, 2015). This approach uses class time for a variety of active-learning techniques, or techniques that require the students to engage in their own learning with meaningful activities (Prince, 2004). The traditional lecture or content is moved outside of the regular class time and often delivered through electronic means. Class activities, combined with online videos or other out-of-class activities, provide students with multiple ways of learning course material (Bergman & Sams, 2012).

In regard to the out-of-class components, the flipped classroom approach could be well suited for the UAE classroom due to its use of technology to deliver the traditional lecture. As suggested by Engin (2014), in the UAE, mobile learning has become an integral part of education, and “no longer is it possible to ignore the push to incorporate mobile technology into the classroom” (p. 13). Farah (2014) concurs, stating that Arab learners are technologically advanced. The use of technology to deliver lectures, lessons,

and course content before the regular class time provides the extra time for students to process new knowledge and concepts, while allowing the learner and second-language learner in particular, opportunities to go back and review complex or difficult concepts and vocabulary (Fallows, 2013; Khanova, Roth, Rodgers, & McLaughlin, 2015).

Additionally, the flipped classroom approach emphasizes student-centered learning (SCL) activities, which require mastery of concepts and skills as opposed to memorization of them (Bergman & Sams, 2012). If the concept of mastery was applied to the UAE Qualifications Framework, this could be conceptualized as whether or not the student was able to master a particular learning outcome. For students coming from earlier educational experiences that encouraged memorization, the flipped classroom could potentially help them to engage with the learning content, comprehend knowledge, and acquire needed skills and competencies, thus mastering specific learning outcomes (Bergman & Sams, 2012; NQA, n.d.).

SCL strategies can help second-language learners make connections to what they are learning. Techniques such as applying second-language vocabulary to real-life situations help learners to integrate learning within their own unique backgrounds and life experiences (Shen & Xu, 2015). And while the social work program currently uses a combination of traditional lecture and active-learning techniques, a flipped classroom provides additional time to incorporate student-centered and active-learning techniques (Prince, 2004).

Finally, SCL is important in social work education. More specifically, active-learning and experiential techniques that require application are essential in social work education to help students conceptualize and gain awareness of complex practice

situations (Altshuler & Bosch, 2003; Garthwait, 2015). Students, however, also must be able to apply theories and evidence-based knowledge and skills to people's problems. As described by Garthwait (2015), social work requires cognitive abilities to use theoretical and empirical knowledge to analyze client needs and interventions, thus integrating theory with practice. Karolich and Ford (2013) maintain that many students struggle to apply psychological and social theories to client case samples and client issues. They argue further that many students may not be able to acquire the necessary higher-order thinking skills in a passive classroom where the teacher primarily lectures.

Yet perhaps the most salient reason to use the flipped classroom approach is the flexibility it offers as it can be customized to meet the needs of specific teaching and learning contexts such as those inherent in a UAE social work course (Filatova, 2015).

Research Questions

This two-part study first explored perceived obstacles to learning among learners and instructors, followed by an exploration of a flipped class approach to address student engagement and comprehension in a UAE social work course. The flipped classroom approach was chosen for this study due to its flexibility and possible adaptability to cross-cultural teaching situations. Research questions for this study included the following:

1. What are the obstacles to learning identified by native-Arabic, female English language learners?
 - a. How can a flipped classroom pedagogy be used to support comprehension and engagement for native-Arabic, female English language learners in an undergraduate social work course?

2. What are the obstacles to learning and teaching as noted by faculty that teach native-Arabic, female English language learners?
 - b. How can a flipped classroom pedagogy provide faculty who are non-Arabic speakers opportunities to support native-Arabic, female English language learners in an undergraduate social work course?

The theoretical foundation that supports this action research study will be explored next and will include sociocultural theory, social constructivism, and student-centered learning.

Theoretical Framework Overview

Sociocultural Theory and Social Constructivism

Developed by Lev Vygotsky, sociocultural theory and social constructivism include the belief that “language and culture are the frameworks through which humans experience, communicate, and understand reality” (Graduate Student Instructor, 2017). The construction of knowledge, or the active engagement of the student in creating his or her own knowledge, occurs within the social context of the environment and not independent of it (Adams, P., 2006; Bashir-Ali, 2011; Lee & Hannafin, 2016; Nunan & Bailey, 2009). In the classroom, cognitive development, knowledge, meaning creation, and skills building are constructed through interactions with students and teachers (Bashir-Ali, 2011; Powell & Kalina, 2009). Thus, Vygotsky emphasized that learning is *not* done in isolation but rather through interactions in the environment. These theories provide a foundation to explore context-specific obstacles related to language and culture and contextualized avenues to address these obstacles. Indeed, instruction that is informed by sociocultural theory and social constructivism respects the learner’s culture

and development of learning activities specific to the learning context (McFeeters, 2003; Mishra, R., 2014).

Student-Centered Learning

Slavich and Zimbardo (2012) argue that when using student-centered learning (SCL) techniques, “instructors should shape course curricula and content based on students’ needs, abilities, interests, and learning styles” (p. 570). Instructors who use SCL approaches engage students in an active and collaborative approach to learning as opposed to teacher-centered approaches in which students passively gain knowledge from a lecture (Lee & Hannafin, 2016; Slavich & Zimbardo, 2012). Thus, what comprises SCL is the engagement of the students in the process of their own learning and could include peer assistance or peer tutoring, cooperative learning, collaborative learning, or problem-based learning (Prince, 2004; Bishop & Verleger, 2013). These types of approaches could use student groups or teams and divide work among the team. Individual contributions are combined to achieve the learning outcome or goal for the group. Student-centered techniques are particularly important because they provide students with flexible and adaptive skills needed for working in modern economies. Yet the caveat is that culture needs to be taken into consideration and the student-centered approach adapted to the cultural context. Flipped classroom activities are examples of SCL and can be tailored to ensure increased opportunities for culturally relevant activities (Ahn, Ingham, Mendez, & Pomona, 2016).

Action Research Methodology Overview

Action Research Rationale

As a social work educator and researcher, one of my goals in undertaking this research was to make a positive difference in my teaching practice and environment. Thus, action research was used as a basis for this study as its methodology provided an effective framework to explore problems in teaching and learning, and to research different teaching strategies or techniques that could potentially enhance instruction (Dana & Hoppey-Yendol, 2014). Action research is research that is done by teachers, with students and other teachers, and provides opportunities for teacher-researchers to make differences in their own organizations, with their own students (Herr & Anderson, 2015; Mertler, 2014). Leedy and Ormond (2013) add that action research is a type of applied research, or research that has current societal relevance, and involves solving a current question or problem in one's work environment. This application to local context made action research a powerful framework for this study. Indeed, this study sought to better understand unique problems experienced by social work students learning in a second-language, UAE class as well as their experiences learning in a flipped class. In other words, it was a relevant framework to employ when the focus of the research was on "the unique characteristics of the population with whom a practice is employed and with whom some action must be taken" (Mertler, 2014, p. 4). Perhaps even more important was the flexibility an action research framework provided. I was able to incorporate unintentional findings from the first phase of this study into the second phase.

As the problem of practice this study sought to understand and address was issues of engagement and comprehension among a group of first-language Arabic, second-

language learners, an emphasis on context and culturally relevant interventions became important. The research design included an exploration of the unique problems experienced by students and faculty as well as the implementation of a culturally relevant pedagogical approach that could enhance learning. Thus, this study was divided into two phases. In Phase I, specific obstacles to teaching and learning were explored. During the following semester, Phase II was implemented and built upon the findings of Phase I.

This action research study included the use of qualitative strategies. Qualitative strategies, as defined by Denzin and Lincoln (2011), (cited by Creswell and Poth, 2017), include an emphasis on the situated nature of qualitative research, or research “that locates the observer in the world” (p. 7). The use of an ethnographic qualitative approach to this study provided a means for me to participate, observe, and explore participant perspectives and experiences within the unique cultural context of a UAE college classroom (Creswell & Poth, 2017; Patton, 2015). For example, what are the common experiences of first-language Arabic learners in a UAE, second-language social work classroom environment? What are common experiences of non-Arabic-speaking instructors who teach second-language learners? What are common experiences of second-language students in a class in which a new pedagogical approach is used?

Research Design—Research Questions 1 and 2

Research questions 1 and 2 were addressed in Phase I. Data collected and analyzed during this phase was used to answer questions regarding perceived obstacles of first-language Arabic learners and instructors teaching in a UAE, second-language environment. Data collected included one open-ended-question survey, a faculty focus

group, and semistructured interviews with students. This data was collected the semester prior to the implementation of the Phase II flipped class approach.

A qualitative ethnographic research design was used to study Phase I. This design was chosen due to the importance of understanding how the cultural context influenced obstacles and the perception of obstacles in a second-language learning environment or, as Patton (2015) points out, “How does culture explain perspectives and behaviors?” (p. 100). Additionally, my role in the research was that of participant observer, both participating as an instructor and researcher as well as observing through the process of data collection and reflection on the research process. As Patton (2015) emphasizes, participant observation is a primary method of ethnographic research.

Research Design—Research Subquestions a and b

Data from Phase I was used to inform Phase II for the implementation of a flipped class approach. Data collected and analyzed in Phase II was used to answer research questions of how a flipped class could be used to support students learning in a second-language environment and how a flipped class approach could be used by faculty who were non-Arabic speakers to support learning. Data collected included weekly audio transcripts of portions of the flipped class meetings, field notes, research journal, and semistructured, post-interviews with students. This data was used to understand how a flipped class could increase student engagement and comprehension. Transcripts were collected one time a week, and field notes were collected each time the class met. Data was collected from week 1 through week 12 of a 15-week semester. Post flipped course student interviews took place during weeks 11 and 12. Additionally, a content analysis of student assessment question responses was used to garner student comprehension

information. A qualitative, ethnographic approach was again used to understand the influence of culture and how a contextualized flipped class approach could support student learning. Figure 1.1 depicts the two-phase study and the flow of information from Phase I to Phase II.

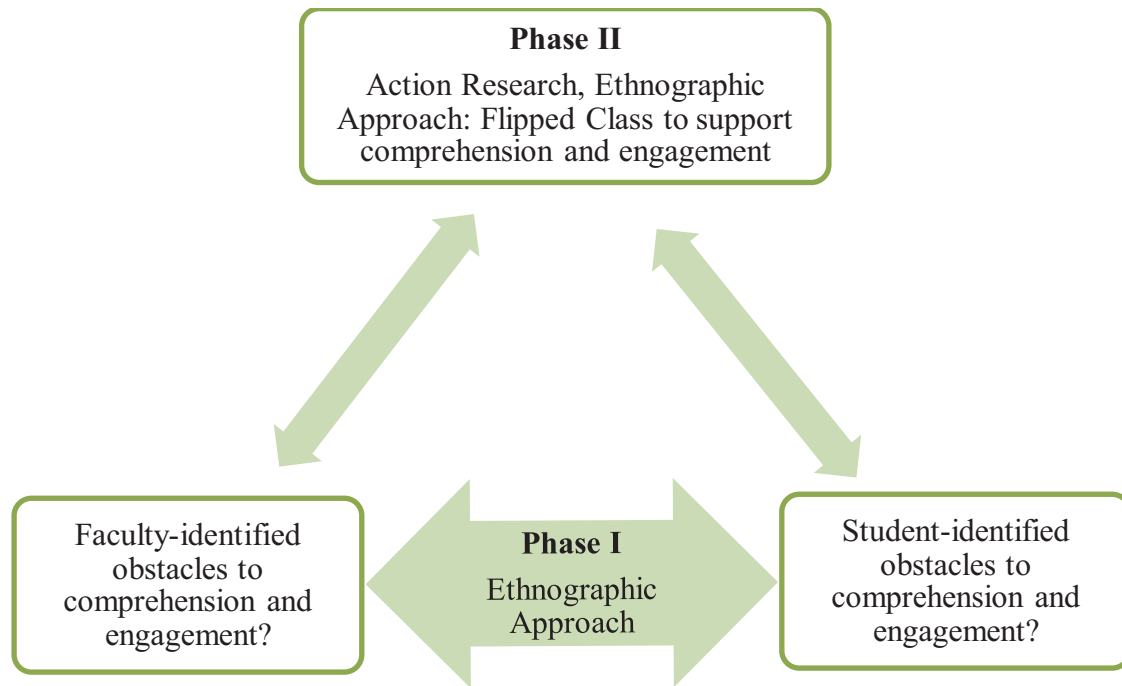


Figure 1.1 Ethnographic Action Research Design

Trustworthiness: Validity and Reliability

Validity strategies to ensure the data indeed measured what it was supposed to measure included triangulation through the gathering of multiple sources of data, member checking after Phase I and Phase II to ensure the accuracy of the emergent and a priori themes, and peer debriefing through asking a peer to read through the findings (Creswell, 2014; Mertler, 2014). Reliability measures included multiple rounds of coding and consistent code definitions to ensure stability of qualitative coding through the use of a codebook. An external coder was also used to check coding and establish a degree of intercoder agreement.

Additionally, this study was firmly grounded in its theoretical framework and methods chosen to study this topic. Specifically, the sociocultural framework emphasizes the inherent role of culture in learning; thus, an ethnographic approach that emphasizes the influence of culture on a phenomena or problem connects the methods used to study the problem to its theoretical framework. Finally, while this study is not generalizable nor is it meant to be generalizable to other populations, the use of thick rich descriptions in chapters 3 and 4 could help the reader determine the extent of transferability to his or her own context and teaching and learning environments (Dana & Hoppey-Yendol, 2014).

Positionality

I had a dual and active role as both researcher and participant and was the instructor for the course, the researcher, and a participant. As such, Herr and Anderson (2015) emphasize the importance of ongoing self-reflection in regard to one's "multiple positionalities" in the study (p. 76). This ongoing self-reflection was documented through the use of a research reflection journal. A research reflection journal also provided additional transparency in the research process and was an avenue to explore my thoughts, feelings, and perceptions about observations and the research process (Ortlipp, 2008).

As described by Dana and Hoppey-Yendol (2014), action research and teacher inquiry are contextual and occur within a specific place to include the understanding of diverse cultures within the classroom and school to improve instruction. For the purposes of this study, action research provided the necessary focus "on the unique characteristics of the population with whom a practice is being employed" (Mertler, 2014, p. 4).

Brayboy and Deyhle (2000) also warn of issues with cultural outsiders as they gather qualitative data. These include “failing to see the nuances from the perspective of the informants” (Brayboy & Deyhle, 2000, p. 165). While I am an insider in regard to the teaching faculty, I am also a cultural outsider. This was a particular concern during student interviews as both language and cultural barriers could have inhibited an objective interpretation of the data. Thus, an interpreter was used to address possible language barriers.

Significance and Limitations

Significance

Improving practice within a specific cultural context, and gaining an understanding of the use of an innovative yet culturally different pedagogical approach, are in part what makes this study significant. Certainly, of primary significance for me was the opportunity to improve my own teaching practice through the gathering of information about how a particular group of UAE social work students learn best, and how a flipped classroom approach could be contextualized to meet their learning needs (Mertler, 2014). As an educator one of my daily concerns is determining how students learn best in a second-language environment. To understand this, I was challenged to consider culturally specific obstacles to learning. These could include the learning backgrounds of students as well as students’ cultural expectations of what teaching and learning should be. These expectations could easily clash with the use of an innovative yet culturally different teaching approach such as a flipped classroom. Thus, an added significance of this study is the importance of understanding culturally specific obstacles and addressing those obstacles through the modification of an innovative teaching

method. Additionally, while student-centered learning (SCL) is a theoretical foundation for this study, SCL such as a flipped class approach, when used with students who may have a limited background of exposure to this type of learning, may not work or may only partially work. As Burt (2004) suggests, it is when complete immersion of active-learning pedagogies is used without adequately preparing students that student are at greater risk. When teachers understand and use the context to attempt to make certain an innovative teaching method is relevant to the unique culture and background of the students, they create conditions that help to ensure the approach is more effective (Burt, 2004; Shukri, 2014).

Beyond my teaching practice, this research is potentially useful to UAE administrators and instructors regarding perceptions of students and faculty as to what they perceive as working or not working in second-language learning environments and how a flipped class could be used to support teaching and learning. Additionally, educators from outside the UAE may find this study relevant to their own efforts in contextualizing pedagogical approaches. Finally, this information has the potential to inform social work education and how a flipped class could be used to further contextualize a social work course. As the social work curriculum at my institution, like other social work programs in Arabic or Middle Eastern countries, is heavily influenced by Western scholarship, how could a social work course be further contextualized to meet the educational needs of students who will practice within their local communities? This research considers ways that a flipped classroom approach could be used to tailor social work education to a specific context.

Yet are there social justice concerns addressed in this research that are significant? Social justice pedagogy, according to Lemley (2014), includes a common goal of equitable education in which all students have the opportunity to excel. This includes achievement both inside and outside the classroom. This research addresses teaching and learning concerns for UAE women that as a group may have increased time constraints due to social role and family obligations (Daleure, Albon, Hinkston, et al., 2014; Hassane et al., 2009; Lambert, 2008). This is a particular concern for time pressure outside of a college. Thus another significant area of this research is how a flipped class, with its out-of-class requirements, could be implemented with students who may have these kinds of time issues and pressures (Bergman & Sams, 2012; Findlay-Thompson & Mombourquette, 2015; Han, 2015; Kim, Kim, Khera, & Getman, 2014; Overmyer, 2014).

Finally, through this action research study, I would like to provide data and a rationale for continuing to implement trials of flipped classroom in social work classes and to further engage native-Arabic, second-language social work students (Mertler, 2014; Mok, 2014).

Limitations

The following are limitations to this study:

1. The study results cannot be generalized beyond the research participants. The knowledge may be deemed transferable by the reader if the context is similar.
2. A researcher-participant language barrier existed in which an interpreter was used. Squires (2009) reminds that language changes during the process of translation and increases the potential for misunderstanding during the

interview process. Even though member checking was completed with both participants and the translator, this barrier can still influence the interpretation of the results (Squires, 2009).

3. My position within the study, as both an instructor of the course and the researcher, increases the potential problems of objectivity in the gathering, analyzing, and reporting of findings (Brayboy and Deyhle, 2000).

Summary and Organization

This chapter provided a background and context of the problems faced by undergraduate, second-language learners in a social work program at a UAE college. A flipped classroom approach consisting of student-centered learning techniques, combined with the use of technology, was proposed to address problems of engagement and comprehension (Hamdan et al., 2013). Yet questions of how a flipped classroom approach could be contextualized to a UAE social work classroom suggested a thorough investigation of obstacles to learning and teaching as well as the collection of student perception and comprehension data. The following chapters will provide an account of how second-language problems of learning and teaching were explored with a particular group of UAE social work students and instructors, and how their perceptions and suggestions were incorporated in a flipped class approach to teaching.

Chapter 2 will explore relevant research on current obstacles to learning faced by UAE national women, second-language obstacles, and other obstacles to comprehension in UAE college classrooms. The sociocultural, social constructivist, and student-centered learning theoretical foundation of this study will be explored as well as relevant research

regarding the use of a flipped classroom and the rationale for the methodological design of the study.

Chapter 3 provides a description and analysis of the research design, participants, setting, selected methodology, data collection and analysis procedures, and ethical safeguards used throughout. Chapter 3 also provides a thorough description of the qualitative ethnographic design used for data collection and analysis in Phase I and II of the study.

Chapter 4 provides a breakdown of the study results and findings and discussions of these findings. Chapter 4 is organized according to the two phases of the study. Finally, Chapter 5 will provide an action plan for future cycles of this action research project, final reflection of this action research, future research recommendations, and conclusion.

Key Terms and Definitions

Definitions important to this study are as follows:

Active learning. Any educational strategy that engages the student in the learning process. Examples include collaborative and cooperative learning (Prince, 2004).

Blended learning. Convergence of online and face-to-face education.

Camtasia. Commonly used and flexible video editing software that provides screen video and audio capture. Videos once uploaded can be watched on almost any device.

Culture. “The shared patterns of behaviors and interactions, cognitive constructs, and affective understanding that are learned through a process of socialization. These shared patterns identify the members of a culture group while also distinguishing those of

another group” (CARLA, n.d., para. 1). In the proposed study, the instructor is from a different culture than the students.

Emirati Nationals. Citizens of the UAE who share the common culture of the Arabian Peninsula, the common language of Arabic, and the common religion of Islam.

Ethnography. A type of qualitative research approach in which culture is considered primary in understanding a problem or phenomenon (Patton, 2015).

Flipped or inverted classroom. These two terms will be used interchangeably throughout the dissertation. Flipped or inverted classroom is a teaching strategy that delivers lecture content through online videos outside of class and uses class time for active- learning and practical-application activities (Arnold-Garza, 2014).

Learning management system. A framework and infrastructure that handles, delivers, and manages instructional content (Watson & Watson, 2007).

Mobile technology. A variety of portable devices on which technology can be used. These could include mobile phones, laptops, tablets, etc.

NQF. National Qualification Framework of the UAE. UAE national initiative created to align UAE educational programs with industry competencies and standards.

Second-language learner. A learner who learns in a language that is not his or her first language. In the case of this study, second-language learners who are first-language Arabic speakers and are learning in an environment where English is the language of instruction.

Student-Centered Learning (SCL). Active and collaborative approaches to learning as opposed to teacher-centered approaches in which students passively gain knowledge from a lecture (Lee & Hannafin, 2016; Slavich & Zimbardo, 2013).

UAE. United Arab Emirates. A country located on the Arabian Peninsula in the Middle Eastern region of the world.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

How can obstacles to engagement and comprehension among students learning in a second language be optimally addressed? This two-phase action research study first explored these obstacles within the specific context of a UAE undergraduate social work classroom, followed by the implementation of a flipped class approach to understand how this approach could support learning. Specific attention was given to issues of cultural and contextual relevancy when using a traditionally Western pedagogical approach in an international setting. Yet understanding these issues began with a literature review. Indeed, this study resides in a preexisting knowledge base that informed this research and provided a rationale for this action research study (Dana & Hoppey-Yendol, 2014).

This review is organized into four sections. Beginning with the problems experienced by UAE second-language learners, this review provides insight into the historical and current obstacles to learning experienced by Emirati students. Next, the theoretical foundation that supports this research is explored, as well as how this research is thoroughly grounded in its theoretical foundation of sociocultural and social constructivist theories, and student-centered learning (SCL). Following the theoretical foundation, an alternate teaching approach, the flipped class, is considered. The compatibility of the flipped classroom approach with social work education and with second-language and diverse teaching environments is also reviewed and, again, connected to the theoretical foundation of this study (Grant & Osanloo, 2011). Finally,

the methodology and design implementation used to explore obstacles to learning and how a flipped class could be used to support learning are provided (Leedy & Ormond, 2005; Mertler, 2014).

Obstacles to Engagement, Comprehension, and Instruction

Obstacles to Engagement and Instruction

Obstacles to engagement and instruction can include gender role responsibilities that may interfere with classroom engagement, lack of contextualization of education, and earlier passive learning experiences.

Gender role responsibilities. Certainly, obstacles to engagement can include inconsistent attendance and lack of time outside of class to study course materials. For UAE women, these problems can be persistent. UAE female students face challenges specific to their gender and societal roles. Gender roles of Emirati women are dictated by tradition and religious interpretation (Gallant & Pounder, 2008; Marmenout & Lirio, 2014). These roles are structured, often rigid, and where women assume the primary role of family caretaker (Hassane et al., 2009; Marmenout & Lirio, 2014). For example, the role of caretaker and other household responsibilities are often assumed by the eldest unmarried female. She may be expected to assist with the care of siblings—such as tutoring younger siblings, as parents may lack the education to do this—to travel with her family, or to take care of sick family members. Family obligations will come first, before school or employment responsibilities (Daleure, Albon, & Hinkston, 2014; Lambert, 2008). The primary focus for Emirati women is the “well-being of their families” (Marmenout & Lirio, 2014, p. 152), and it is believed that no woman should put her own aspirations ahead of her family (Gallant & Pounder, 2008). Indeed, Lambert (2008)

describes the UAE as a society in transition where younger generations are stuck between a traditional society and a society that increasingly embraces liberalism.

Many young women will marry while in college and will be expected to have children “within the first two years of marriage due to cultural values of fertility and government policies that give economic incentives to UAE Nationals to increase the Emirati birthrate” (Lambert, 2008, p. 106). A high birthrate is encouraged by both tradition and the government, and women are pressured to continue the tradition of having large families (Marmenout & Lirio, 2014). The lack of quality child care centers forces many students to rely on foreign-born housemaids or family members to care for children while they are at college. This reliance on housemaids, however, from a cultural point of view, is seen as problematic due to concerns that the quality of family life will suffer if families rely on housemaids from different cultural and religious backgrounds who may not provide suitable guidance for children (Gallant & Pounder, 2008).

Additional problems related to gender and attendance involve transportation. Lack of culturally acceptable transportation can limit college attendance. Some families will restrict female members from driving, and social customs may inhibit female students from taking taxicabs with unknown male drivers without suitable chaperones (Gallant & Pounder, 2008; Samier, 2015). In some cases, college buses are available but may include long wait times that may preclude women with time constraints from using the bus. Thus, transportation can lead to inconsistent attendance, when family members or other chaperones are unavailable and when the student does not have a driver’s license or is not allowed to pursue getting one.

History of Passive Learning. Madsen (2009) posits that many first-year UAE college students struggle due to the differences between the college learning environment and their high school environment. These high school environments often used teacher-centered approaches to teaching and learning where the teacher was in charge of transmitting information and may have primarily lectured, and students may have used rote memorization as a common learning strategy (Burt, 2004; Shukri, 2014; Vassall-Fall, 2011). Students arrive at college without the experience or skills to engage adequately in classrooms that use active learning (Burt, 2004). As Burt warns, “in contexts where active learning approaches are new to the students, there is a danger that students can become unmotivated due to inadequate preparation and unfamiliarity with the learning style” (Burt, 2004, p. 2).

Shukri (2014) links rote memorization in primary and secondary schools to Arabic traditions that focus on memorization of Qur’anic texts and Islamic religious teachings. In Saudi Arabia, for example, practices of rote memorization that require the learner to depend on the teacher persist today (Shukri, 2014). Richardson (2004) adds that years of passive learning in UAE primary and secondary schooling make changing to a student-centered model even more challenging. This can create anxiety and discomfort for students who come from teacher-centered learning environments (Burt, 2004; Richardson, 2004; Vassall-Fall, 2011).

However, Burt (2004), supported by Shukri (2014), counters these arguments, stating that SCL pedagogies can work with Arabic students provided students are adequately prepared, expectations and reasons for using specific teaching strategies are made clear, and flexibility is used in the classroom to meet the individual needs of

students. It is when complete immersion of active-learning pedagogies is used without adequately preparing students that student are at greater risk (Burt, 2004).

Lack of educational contextualization. Hassane, McClam, and Woodside (2009) suggest that UAE social service education is a unique blend of Arab culture and Islam, which makes teaching challenging and the “fit with a Western template difficult” (p. 31). While social work education has been in the forefront of addressing cultural and religious diversity, it has yet to fully develop an indigenized model for curriculum development in the Middle East and UAE (Crabtree, 2008). Social work curriculum in Islamic countries continues to be strongly influenced by Western scholarship and tends to prefer “Eurocentric and Western ideals instead of embracing Arab world views” (Veeran, 2013, p. 1082). Islamic worldviews are rarely integrated into Western scholarship, in part due to secularization of the social sciences (Samier, 2015). Yet, in regard to the Western influences on social work education in Arab countries, “these influences have been understandably critiqued as culturally incongruent as well as ignorant of broader Islamic principles” (Crabtree, 2008, p. 537). Examples of incorporating Islamic worldviews to ensure cultural relevancy could include acknowledgment of responsibilities to the collective, the influence of tribal culture, Sharia law, and Islamic Universal principles, all of which impact how social problems are addressed in Islamic societies (Crabtree, 2008). Additionally, acknowledging differences in how family, community, gender, age, mental health, and/or problem solving are conceptualized could also increase cultural relevancy (Veeran, 2013).

Even more problematic can be the incongruence between Islamic values and social work training, or “tensions between ontological realities of social needs and the

prevailing perception of what is culturally appropriate in terms of professional training and practice” (Crabtree, 2008, p. 537). Examples include not discussing or superficially discussing problems that are considered culturally inappropriate to talk about, such as rape, sexual abuse, and partner and family violence. Problems in training can lead to inabilities to meet community needs, due to a lack of cultural contextualization of social work, leaving students unprepared for diverse practice issues (Crabtree, 2008; Hassane et al., 2009; Veeran, 2013).

Obstacles to Comprehension and Instruction

Obstacles to comprehension can include learning in a second language, lack of cultural language contextualization, and differences in pedagogical expectations.

Second-language learning. Bilingual education can be thought of as instruction in two languages for any or all parts of a school curriculum (Gallagher, 2011). Per Gallagher, this means the second language is added at no penalty to the first language. Challenges to bilingual and second-language learning include use of slang, different dialects, and vocabulary in the second language that can make comprehension difficult for second-language learners (Feledichuck & Wong, 2014; Gallagher, 2011).

Specific to Arabic, because of the “diaglossic features of Arabic, as well as the linguistic distance between Arabic and English” (Gallagher, 2011, p. 66), learning in bilingual settings can be particularly challenging (Gallagher, 2011; Shukri, 2014). Similar to other Arabic speakers, UAE nationals use diaglossic speech patterns and use both formal and informal or modern and colloquial Arabic (Gallagher, 2011; Shafiro, Levy, Khami-Dakwar, & Kharkhurin, 2012; Shukri, 2014). Modern Standard Arabic reflects the language of government and business while colloquial Arabic is the regional dialect

(Gallagher, 2011). Gallagher (2011) emphasizes that instructors do not always appreciate that learning Modern Standard Arabic is, for many students, like learning a second language.

Additional linguistic challenges for native-Arabic, English language learners include learning a completely different script and understanding the nuances in English–Arabic symbol-sound correspondence. English language has a “full one-to-one symbol-sound correspondence or . . . both consonant and vowel sounds are written in English” (Gallagher, 2011, p. 67). In Arabic writing, only constant and long vowels are written, which can lead to issues in English language writing (Shukri, 2014). A compounding problems includes the fact that vowels are not present in Modern Standard Arabic, creating problems for native-Arabic speakers in understanding oral English language (Gallagher, 2011; Shukri, 2014; Shafiro et al., 2012). Other issues include differences in the following areas: subject-verb agreement, verb tenses, use of articles, Arabic orthography or spelling in which placement of the letter in the word is subjective and the shape of the letter varies according to where it is placed in the word, and opposite page orientation between the two languages in both reading and writing (Gallagher, 2011; Goodwin, 2013; Shukri, 2014). Goodwin (2013) argues that differences are so vast between Arabic and English that native-Arabic speakers cannot rely on their first-language abilities for building second-language, English competency.

While these linguistic challenges pose considerable potential difficulties for native-Arabic speakers learning in English, Gallagher, on a positive note, emphasizes research supports that learners progress in content courses, such as social work, as well when studying in a second language as when studying in their first language. Gallagher

(2011) concluded that in the UAE students need to develop both their indigenous language and the “national capacity” to use English (p. 10). Finally, while there continue to be debates in the gulf region regarding the widespread teaching of English as Western hegemony, Gallagher (2011) maintains that UAE educational beliefs are pragmatic and “education in the UAE school system is premised on an economic-political belief in the advantages of ‘both and’ instead of ‘either or’” (p. 64).

Culture, language, and comprehension. Goodwin (2013) emphasizes the importance of using culturally relevant teaching strategies when teaching in a second language because “communication is mediated by the learners’ social and cultural identities” (p. 71). When instructors understand cultural dynamics, they can more easily add clarity to interactions and explanations (Goodwin, 2013). Native-Arabic, English language learners, for example, are more likely to use code switching in their verbal communication or mixing two languages or styles of speech together (Goodwin, 2013). This can include use of Arabic words mixed together with English words or words that signal collective cultural backgrounds such as the use of *we* instead of *I* (Filatova, 2015; Goodwin, 2013). Instructors can use teaching strategies that connect with collective cultural values such as group work (Filatova, 2015). Conversely, Shukri (2014) adds that because culture influences written expression and how students perceive meanings, students transfer their first-language culture to their second-language learning. Thus, as Shukri (2014) argues, “addressing cultural issues helps to socialize English-language learners regarding embedded cultural norms” (p. 195). As Kolikant (2011) points out, “learning difficulties may arise because of cultural overlap, as students might

contextualize the situation, according to a cultural perspective different than that expected by the teacher” (p. 544).

Culture and pedagogical clashes. A cultural gap can occur when instruction is not customized to meet the cultural and social needs of students (Polleck & Shabdin, 2013). Al Issa (2005) highlights the problem of instructors coming from Western countries to teach students from Eastern cultures as is common in the UAE. Intercultural conflicts can arise due to differing communication styles and belief systems that lead to a lack of understanding on the part of both student and instructor, which can lead to frustration for both parties (Al Issa, 2005). Instructor reliance on previous ways of helping students to understand or on previous ideas or methods of teaching may not work in a culturally different setting. As Polleck and Shabdin (2013) argue, “When teachers do not share the same cultural backgrounds, linguistic codes, social protocols and/or value systems, discord can occur that detracts from student learning” (p. 143).

Hatcher (2008) points out the issue of nonaccommodation responses by Western educators. These are responses based on assumptions that Western teaching approaches are universally applicable to any teaching context as they are based on sound evidence. Thus, the instructor disregards the culture, such as culturally divergent communication styles, patterns, beliefs, or views (Al Issa, 2005; Hatcher, 2008).

Two common areas of differences in cultural patterns are individualism versus collectivism and high context versus low-context environments. Western instructors may unknowingly adopt an individualistic perspective and assume all students should be self-reliant, autonomous, and motivated (Al Issa, 2005; Hatcher, 2008). In collective cultures, more commonly found in the East such as Arab tribal cultures, persons view themselves

and their identity in terms of the group or collective (Al Issa, 2005). Pedagogy, in collective cultures, will usually follow the norms of the culture, such as students being expected to listen, not questioning the instructor or the instructor's wisdom, and the teacher being responsible for the students' learning (Al Issa, 2005; Veeran, 2013). This teacher-centered approach mimics status distinctions between adults and children (Veeran, 2013). Changing this hierarchical approach to learning through the use of student-centered learning approaches could potentially clash with the Arabic cultural foundation. Participatory learning, according to Veeran (2013), "may be limited in Arab cultural contexts not because of students' lack of ability but rather in observing the practice of 'adult wisdom' and respect" (p. 1082).

In regard to high-and low-context teaching environments and an instructor's educational approach, Western-trained educators are often trained in low-context teaching environments. These are environments in which clear and specific communication is valued and the explicit meaning or message in oral and written communication is expected. This can be contrasted with a high-context environment, such as the UAE, in which meaning is inferred and communication is more indirect because the collective culture provides a context in which meaning is understood (Al Issa, 2005). The goal of high-context communication is "harmony and saving face" (Al Issa, 2005, p.154). Hatcher (2008) emphasizes an added dimension of uncertainty avoidance or the degree to which a culture is comfortable with a lack of structure. Students from Arab cultures may prefer less uncertainty, and prefer order and good class management over creativity (Al Issa, 2005; Hatcher, 2008).

Summary

Obstacles to learning among female, native-Arabic speakers in English-language learning undergraduate classes can include sociocultural issues of gender roles, a history of passive learning or dependence on rote memorization, a lack of cultural contextualization of course materials and pedagogical approaches, problems related to learning in a second language or bilingual classrooms, and a lack of recognition of the links between cultural norms and second-language acquisition.

Theoretical Foundation

This study considers obstacles to learning and teaching among second-language learners in a UAE college course as well as the use of a pedagogical approach historically and culturally *different* from approaches used in Arabic cultures (Filatova, 2015; Veeran, 2013). Thus, sociocultural and social constructivism theories, developed by Russian psychologist Lev Vygotsky, support this research. These theories propose that thinking and learning are not solely individual occurrences, but rather are shaped by sociocultural forces through the interaction of the learner with his or her environment (Kozulin, Gindis, Ageyev, & Miller, 2003). They provide a necessary framework to understand the influence of culture and emphasize the importance of adapting teaching approaches in ways that are culturally responsive. Student-centered learning (SCL) is a flexible teaching model that could potentially enhance the teaching environment through its emphasis on construction of knowledge through student “interactions with their environment as well as other encounters and past experiences” (Lee & Hannafin, 2016, p. 709). This flexibility is key when considering adaptation of a teaching approach to a specific context (Filatova, 2015; Lee & Hannafin, 2016).

Sociocultural Theory

Zones of proximal development. According to Sociocultural theory, students learn through socially situated interactions. An important component of Vygotsky's sociocultural theory is zones of proximal development (ZPD). ZPD emphasizes that a student may be ready for learning but needs help and support to develop independent functioning or as proposed by Vygotsky the actual developmental level of the student is determined by the distance between "independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers" (Chaiklin, 2003; Laszlo, 2011; Vygotsky, 1978, p. 86). Through interactions with a teacher and/or peers, the student receives the necessary support to develop skills and competencies or gain understanding, known as scaffolding (Overmyer, 2014; Powell & Kalina, 2009; McKinley, 2015). Thus, with additional help, collaboration, or some type of guidance, the student is able to do or problem-solve more than if left alone (Chaiklin, 2003). Class or online activities can allow students the opportunity to practice and demonstrate skills as well as gain necessary support from peers and/or the instructor (Danker, 2015; Overmyer, 2014; McFeeters, 2003; Powell & Kalina, 2009). The key is that learning happens through the interactions with others, and teaching should be individualized to meet students in this space between independent functioning and functioning with support (Laszlo, 2011). Indeed, as Laszlo (2011) contends, "guidance is the key instructional approach in sociocultural perspectives" (p. 60).

However, what about the role of culture? The culture of the student can be used to shape interactions positively. For example, Kolikant (2011), proposes a metaphorical

learning space he describes as fertile zones of cultural encounters. It is in this space that an instructor can use students' cultural capital, i.e., values, beliefs, practices, and ways of problem solving, as a conduit to the academic learning or perspective. These cultural tools are made accessible in the learning environment (Kolikant, 2011; Lee, 2003).

Psychological tools. Kozulin (2003) asserts that a key component of sociocultural theory is psychological tools. Psychological tools are symbols, signs, semiotics, and language that become internalized and help learners “master their own natural psychological functions of perception, memory, attention” (Kozulin, 2003, p. 445). Indeed, as Vygotsky suggested, “human beings actively remember with the help of signs” (p. 51) and these signs include social and cultural tools which can mediate learning (Feryok, 2017). Indeed, higher cognitive functioning is dependent upon these tools or mediating aids available to the student through his or her interaction with their environment. They both enable the construction of knowledge and are internalized by the student to aid with future problem solving (Scott & Palincsar, n.d.). For example, the student may first engage in a discussion or other intentional social interactions. The student then internalizes this interaction and it may become a psychological tool available to the student (Miller, 2003).

Lee (2003) suggests that instructors can use the cultural tools or everyday resources of the students to mediate and support discipline-specific learning. Language and culturally specific ways of problem solving can be used as tools to aid in learning as culture is “at the center of human sense-making activities” (Lee, 2003, p. 394).

Social Constructivism

McKinley (2015) contends that social constructivism includes the belief that knowledge is “socially situated and constructed through the interactions with others” (p. 184). In other words, social constructivism emphasizes that learning often happens through collaboration with others, and cognition and meaning are derived from interactions within the learner’s environment (Barab & Duffy, 2012). Learning is not passively assimilating new knowledge in isolation but rather occurs within social interactions where the learner is actively involved in the learning process and integrated into a community of learners (Barab & Duffy, 2012; Kolikant, 2011). Thus, knowledge is not only constructed, it is co-constructed. Additionally, the focus of teaching becomes the learning and not the performance of the learner. The learner is an active co-creator of knowledge and the instructor becomes a guide or facilitator who aids in the process (Adams, P., 2006).

When considering ZPD, the interdependence of the learner with others in his or her learning environment becomes important. The interdependence with others could be conceptualized as a community of learners or a community in which all learners are “involved in the collective and individual effort to understand” (Hill, 2012, p. 269). A novice learner in a community of learners, for example, may rely on more expert members for scaffolding. Yet over time, the novice gains the necessary problem-solving skills and moves to a more expert role. In the case of learners in a second-language environment, more expert members assist more novice members with communication, providing opportunities to practice in the second language (Fallows, 2013; Hill, 2012). Examples of collective activities could include collaborative learning, in which small

groups of students work towards a common goal, or problem-based learning, where problems are introduced and, through small-group work, students research the problem and develop potential solutions (Prince, 2004; Sage & Sele, 2015; Savery, 2006). These types of learning could work well in a UAE classroom as the culture of Emirati Nationals is a collective culture, or a culture in which “social structures are based on tribal familial affiliations” (Daleure, Albon, Hinkston, et al., 2014, p. 12). Tribal or collective culture emphasizes interdependence of the group as well as behaviors and goals based on the needs and priorities of the group (McFeeters, 2003).

Sociocultural Theory, Social Constructivism, and Social Work

Social work education, social constructivism, and sociocultural theories are connected and compatible. According to Neuman and Blundo (2000), the social constructivist notion that a social worker must be able to recognize the implications of culture, traditions, the meaning of language, and the sociopolitical context of interactions is integral to social work education and practice. In other words, social work students must learn the numerous influences that impact the client. Papouli (2014) concurs and describes how sociocultural theories remain popular in social work education because of their emphasis on learning in the social environment. Social work education emphasizes the importance of students learning from and through their interactions with others and through both simulated and authentic practice experiences. Social constructivism and sociocultural theories are used by social work students and professionals to understand the thoughts, beliefs, and culture of their clients, and to allow their clients to decide what is best for them (Sahin, 2006; Geraghty, 2012).

Student-Centered Learning

Based on constructivist epistemologies that students construct their own knowledge through interactions in their environments, a student-centered learning model is one in which instructors engage students in authentic and interactive activities (Lee & Hannafin, 2016; Slavich & Zimbardo, 2012). These authentic activities provide students with opportunities to engage with problems that are linked to culture, discipline, or professional practice (Lee & Hannafin, 2016; Land, Hannafin, & Oliver, 2012). Primary concepts of SCL include the importance of learner autonomy, such as students setting their own learning goals and, in the case of collaborative or project-based learning, making decisions regarding project completion (Lee & Hannafin, 2016; Slavich & Zimbardo, 2012). Scaffolding is another component and includes the support of the learner when engaged in SCL activities, such as the use of peer feedback. Finally, SCL includes the belief that there is a greater likelihood of integration and deep, coherent understanding when students engage in meaningful activities as opposed to passively memorizing facts in which they may lack the knowledge of how facts or items fit together (Abdal Haqq, 1998; Pegrum, Bartle, & Longnecker, 2015). But how well does an SCL model work in culturally different settings?

Hatcher (2008) argues for a blending of SCL with cultural expectations of education. His suggestions include the using Socratic teaching methods and project-based learning with students who had traditionally learned in teacher-centered learning cultures. R. Mishra (2014) adds that what should be brought into the classroom are unique yet everyday student experiences, through class discussions and projects. Filatova (2015) goes further to call for the contextualization of class activities and contends that culture

must be considered when adapting any SCL activity. She gives examples of adapting a flipped classroom to Middle Eastern, Arabic learners and the use of group work, which she contends works well in collective cultures, such as Arabic cultures, to provide students with opportunities to help each other. Thus, as Filatova (2015) supported by Bishop and Verleger (2013) suggests, the class component of the flipped classroom could be contextualized, and the use of activities can vary widely depending upon the context.

Sociocultural, social constructivism theories, and SCL provide a foundation for this study due to the emphasis of these theories on the social and cultural environment of the learner (Kozulin et al., 2003). Sociocultural theory provides guidance on the importance of understanding culture, communication, and context of learners and ensuring cultural tools are made accessible in the learning environment (Kolikant, 2011). Social constructivism provides a basis for understanding the interdependence of the learner with others in his or her environment and the power of collaborative learning for second-language learners and learners from collective cultures such as the UAE (Filatova, 2015; Hamdan et al., 2013; McKinley, 2015). Finally, SCL activities could be adapted and build on cultural strengths such as peer assistance and group work (Mishra, R., 2014; Filatova, 2015).

Theoretical Foundation and a Flipped Classroom to Enhance Comprehension and Engagement

So why use a flipped class approach to increase comprehension and engagement? A flipped class approach provides opportunities for students to self-pace their learning, a key advantage for second-language learners (Fallows, 2013; Han, 2015). Also, a flipped

class offers additional time for students to engage in SCL which can lead to deeper understanding of concepts (Bergman & Sams, 2012).

Comprehension. Through the use of online videos to deliver the traditional lecture, class time is freed for SCL. What happens then could be conceptualized as a reversed Bloom's taxonomy in which the lower levels of learning, such as understanding, are done outside the classroom and the higher levels of learning—application, analyzing, evaluating, and creating—are done in the classroom (Hamdan et al., 2013; Overmyer, 2014; Danker, 2015). These higher levels of learning are accomplished through the use of SCL techniques and social interactions that create more opportunities for deep learning and comprehension (Bashir-Ali, 2011; Filatova, 2015).

Fallows (2013) explains that for struggling students flipped content can be viewed repeatedly by students attempting to learn content in a second language. Han (2015) supports this, describing how students can assimilate their learning at their own pace outside of class. Additionally, moving course content delivery online creates more opportunities for increased interactions between peers and the instructor, both in the classroom and online. When students engage in SCL, such as collaborative or cooperative learning, they actively engage together, integrating what they already know with the new ideas or situations that they experience (Ahn et al., 2016; McKinley, 2015; Neo et al., 2012). When learning is taking place in a second-language learning environment, pedagogies that encourage interaction, discussion, and verbalizations become even more important to stimulate use of the second language as well as critical thinking skills (Fallows, 2013; Han, 2015; Mehring, 2016). Second-language learners can receive more opportunities to recognize and understand language on a lower level of Bloom's

taxonomy outside of class and then focus on upper levels of Bloom's taxonomy during class time (Hamdan et al., 2013).

Engagement. Engagement could be described as a student's active and positive involvement in the learning process (Mandernach, 2015). This involvement is multidimensional and includes behavioral, affective, and cognitive dimensions of engagement (Handelsman, Briggs, Sullivan, & Towler, 2005; Mandernach, 2015; Skinner, Pitzer, & Brule, 2014). For example, behavioral engagement comprises observable behaviors that demonstrate the student is engaged with learning, while affective engagement is the expression of emotions the student has during learning. Cognitive engagement includes the mental energy and strategies used to make cognitive connections (Mandernach, 2015; Skinner et al., 2014).

Lam, Wong, Yang, and Liu (2012) point out that the dimensions of engagement are influenced by contextual factors such as social relatedness and authentic and relevant learning and tasks. As the flipped classroom approach is adaptable to context through the use of contextually relevant SCL strategies that can help students make links between their experiences and new knowledge or concepts, opportunities for engagement with learning are increased. Indeed, Kolikant (2011) challenges instructors to look for "fertile zones of cultural encounters" to intertwine the students' culture with the teaching perspective" (p. 545). He argues that knowledge is situated and evolves out of activities and situations; thus, through each activity, students and instructors have opportunities to create new cultural dialogues based on meeting points of diverse cultural perspectives (Kolikant, 2011). Using Kolikant's idea of fertile zones in this study, social work

professional practice perspectives could be interwoven with culturally specific social problems and case samples in a flexible flipped classroom environment (Kolikant, 2011).

Due to the flexibility of a flipped classroom, its use of SCL, and its adaptability to context, it appears to be an effective approach to address context-specific engagement and comprehension issues.

What Is a Flipped Classroom?

The flipped classroom concept is usually credited to high school chemistry teachers John Bergman and Aaron Sams, who switched the lecture portion of their course outside the classroom through the use of recorded videos while using class time for practical application of concepts (Arnold-Garza, 2014; Bergman & Sams, 2012). Thus, what was traditionally done in the classroom and at home are switched, allowing students the freedom to learn core concepts at their own pace and on their own time (Sinouvassane & Nalini, 2016). Bishop and Verleger (2013) emphasize that the flipped classroom has two components: “interactive group learning activities inside the classroom, and direct computer-based individual instruction outside the classroom” (p. 5).

Online Components

Strayer (2012) argues that what truly makes a flipped classroom is “regular and systematic use of technologies” (p. 172). The student is introduced to knowledge or the lesson online, outside the classroom. Online videos or electronic lectures provide differentiated learning opportunities for students to learn at their own pace, time, and level of comprehension. This provides support for a variety of learning styles (Arnold-Garza, 2014; Danker, 2015; Fallows, 2013; Farah, 2014; Kim et al., 2014). In other words, students can pause, speed up, or slow down videos, thus allowing learning to

become individualized (Bergman & Sams, 2012). Mok (2014) adds that this may increase confidence and engagement of weaker students, who now have opportunities of coming to class as prepared as stronger students. As part of a student-centered learning approach, the student becomes responsible for his or her own learning and prepares ahead of time, prior to the class.

In-class Components

Class time can be spent utilizing a variety of SCL activities that require the student to engage in meaningful activities and in their own learning (Prince, 2004). These in-class activities combine with online videos or other out-of-class activities to give students multiple ways of learning course material (Bergman & Sams, 2012).

Collaboration and group activities, for example, provide various ways for students to help and connect with each other, which can help them make sense of what they are learning and lead to deeper understanding (Finley & Mombourquette, 2014). Kim, Kim, Khera and Getman (2014) suggest that the “heart of learning in a flipped classroom is to engage students in their own learning in the context of collaboration and frequent interactions amongst individuals” (p. 46). In other words, the flipped classroom moves the classroom from a teacher-centered environment, or one in which the teacher role is lecturing and dispensing knowledge, to an environment in which the student takes a more active role and takes more responsibility for his or her own learning (Bergman & Sams, 2012; Danker, 2015; Overmyer, 2014; Sage & Sele, 2015). Finally, Overmyer (2014) points out the benefits of instructor-to-student and peer-to-peer interactions where learners can receive immediate feedback.

Flipped Learning Network

Established in 2012, the Flipped Learning Network (FLN) is a community of flipped learning advocates who attempt to provide research and best practices and raise awareness about flipped learning methods (Flipped Learning Network, 2014). The FNL emphasizes that flipped learning is more than just watching videos outside of class (Flipped Learning Network, 2014). For flipped learning to occur, the FLN contends that instructors need to incorporate the four pillars of flipped learning that include a flexible environment, a learning culture, intentional content, and a professional educator (Flipped Learning Network, 2014).

A flexible learning environment would include the use of different ways to assist students in gaining mastery of the learning, such as the integration of technology along with a variety of class activities. This also includes the instructor's commitment to careful observation of the lessons and making modifications when necessary (Flipped Learning Network, 2014). A learning culture dovetails with the social constructivism foundation of this study and highlights the importance of SCL and moving the instructor to a more facilitatory role. It also includes the importance of scaffolding and feedback during instruction or helping students reach a higher level of understanding (Powell & Kalina, 2009).

Intentional content also connects with sociocultural underpinnings and the importance of ensuring content is culturally and contextually relevant (Goodwin, 2013; Filatova, 2015). This could include content that is relevant for social work within the context of the UAE (Veeran, 2013). Finally, the fourth pillar of flipped learning is a professional educator who is committed to ongoing observation of the class, provides

feedback to students, is reflective in his or her practice, and makes modifications based on observations and reflections. Particularly when teaching in a cross-cultural context and using teaching methods that may be different from teaching approaches historically used in that setting, ongoing reflection becomes particularly important (Brayboy & Deyhle, 2000; Mertler, 2014).

Components of a flipped classroom, then, include integrated online and class-based activities. These components are offered in flexible learning environments where content is relevant and students are provided with ongoing feedback and support. Next, the historical relevance of a flipped classroom approach will be explored.

History of Flipped Classroom

Specific flipped classroom concepts likely evolved within the last fifteen years and developed out of higher education's distributed learning, or instruction that includes a blend of face-to-face and online learning, also known as blended learning (Arnold-Garza, 2014; Strayer, 2012). The actual terms *inverted classroom* and *classroom flip* began to appear around 2000 when Maureen Lage, Glenn Platt, and Michael Treglia published research referring to *inverted classroom* (Educational Academic Standards Consortium, n.d.; Lage, Platt, & Treglia, 2000). Their research discussed out-of-class activities and how an inverted classroom could accommodate a variety of learning styles (Educational Academic Standards Consortium, n.d; Mok, 2014). In 1995, with the beginning of classroom or online-learning management systems, Wesley Baker moved lecture notes and quizzes online and used class time for application activities (Educational Academic Standards Consortium, n.d.; Overmyer, 2014). Between 1996 and 2000, he presented these ideas and used the words *flip classroom* as well as coined the

phrase *guide on the side* when referring to the instructor's role in a flipped classroom (Educational Academic Standards Consortium, n.d.; Overmyer, 2014). In their 2012 book, *Flip Your Classroom: Reach Every Student in Every Class, Every Day*, chemistry teachers Bergman and Sams popularized and advanced the flipped classroom (Bergman & Sams, 2012; Mok, 2014).

Perhaps what helped to popularize the flipped classroom's use of technology to provide short lectures and teach electronically included Khan Academy and TED (Sage & Sele, 2015). In 2004, to help a younger cousin, Salman Khan began to record tutorial videos. Eventually, his tutoring grew to over 4,000 web-based videos watched by millions (Adams, R., 2013; Educational Academic Standards Consortium, n.d.). Shortly after the advent of Khan Academy, Technology, Entertainment and Design (TED) launched its first TED Talks videos in 2006, aimed at spreading ideas through short videos (TED, n.d.). However, replacing the traditional lecture with videos is often credited to Bergman and Sams (Mok, 2014; Overmyer, 2014). In 2007, Colorado's Woodland Park High School chemistry teachers Jonathan Bergman and Aaron Sams began to record their lessons and post them online for students who were unable to attend class (Bergman & Sams, 2012). Absent students reportedly liked the videos, and because they were posted online, soon teachers and other students from all over the world were watching them. Eventually they began to prerecord their lectures as homework and use class time to provide assistance with concepts and inquiry-based activities (Bergman & Sams, 2012).

The following discussion will include a brief history of flipped classroom in social work, with second-language learners, in non-Western countries, in the UAE, and with second-language, female learners and social work education in the UAE.

Flipped classroom and social work education. There is a paucity of research specific to flipped-classroom pedagogy to support or discourage the use of a flipped classroom in social work education. As a flipped classroom is a type of blended learning, and there is more research regarding blended learning in social work or learning that is a mixture of online and face-to-face learning, this section will begin with a discussion of blended learning in social work (Strayer, 2012).

The rise of blended learning was slow and delayed in social work, partly due to concerns that human interaction is minimized in online formats, which limits social work's traditional person-centered approaches and reflective practice skills training (Alaya, 2009; Bellefeuille, 2006). Yet in the last decade, there has been a substantial increase in social work programs offering both distance and blended-learning courses. Rautenbach and Black-Hughes (2012), for example, reported positive student evaluations of interactions among students in an online social work course. Yet because observing and facilitating interactions is essential in social work education and some face-to-face interaction is always preferred, blending of student observation with technology is often recommended (Myfanwy, 2010; Vernon, Vakahali, Pierce, Pittman-Munke & Adkins, 2009).

Through the use of a flipped class approach, more opportunities are provided for face-to-face interactions, yet studies highlighting the use of a flipped class approach in social work are limited. A Canadian study looked at flipped classroom in psychology and

sociology courses, both common, required courses in most social work education programs (Ravenscroft & Luhanga, 2014). The study examined the use of flipped classroom to develop employment skills. The study found preliminary results of an increase in skills and increased opportunity of skill attainment in collaborative learning, oral and written communication, and critical thinking, all skills generally associated with employment readiness (Ravenscroft & Luhanga, 2014). Holmes, Tracy, Painter, Oestrich, and Park (2015) researched the integration of interactive technology and active-learning techniques, which included flipping one class. Student perception was mostly positive, but students did express feeling overwhelmed by the technology.

Flipped classroom with second-language learners. Beginning in 2010, compulsory bilingual instruction (Arabic and English) was introduced in Abu Dhabi, the capital of the United Arab Emirates (Gallagher, 2011). Graduating students who are proficient in both English and Arabic remain a stated goal of the UAE government to ensure graduates are competitive in the global workplace (Alhumaid, 2014). At the tertiary level, English has mostly been the sole language of teaching and instruction, due in part to international and accreditation standards (Al Allaq, 2014; Gallagher, 2011). So how could a flipped class be used to enhance second-language learning?

Han (2015) used a flipped classroom with advanced ESL students to encourage fluency development in speaking. Findings indicated the flipped class provided more learning opportunities for peer and teacher support among students, and coverage of more learning objectives. Cooperative in-class activities and the use of Google voice in online activities contributed to the coverage of additional learning goals (Han, 2015).

Fallows (2013) suggested that attempting to master fluency in a second language can be embarrassing when done in front of others. He discovered that the online, out-of-class component of a flipped classroom could be utilized for practice. Like Han, Fallows (2013) also used and recommended class time to pair strong peers with weaker peers for peer teaching.

Flipped classroom in Eastern countries. Joanne and Lateef (2014) suggest the flipped classroom has become popular in the West but has been slower to catch on in Eastern areas of the world. In Asia and the Middle East, students have traditionally relied on the teacher as the sole source of information, and the lecture continues to be the most common way of transmitting information (Joanne & Lateef, 2014; Vassall-Fall, 2011). Joanne and Lateef (2014) add that students may feel disconnected and disoriented when using a SCL model such as the flipped classroom, as they are used to the teacher at the top of a hierarchal system, apart from the students and not working alongside them. Additionally, as posited by Sinouvassane & Nalini (2016), students in Malaysia resisted the flipped teaching approach due to their dislike of the online time requirements and the expectation that students complete the online activities before coming to class. Azerbaijani adult learners were more likely to prefer order in the classroom over creativity and expected teachers to direct their learning. They also viewed learning as the result of a good teacher as opposed to teaching methods and resources (Hatcher, 2008).

Flipped classroom in the UAE. Skills and future employment of UAE national graduates are ongoing concerns of the UAE Ministry of Education, UAE universities and colleges (Farah & Ridge, 2009). These concerns are addressed in several ways to include an emphasis on technology and mobile learning, an emphasis on student engagement,

linkages to the National Qualifications Framework, and implementation of new pedagogical approaches, such as the flipped classroom, that enhance student engagement (Engin, 2014; Hamdan et al., 2013; HCT, n.d.). The flipped classroom model is also gaining acceptance in the UAE as it incorporates technology in its approach, thus supporting the UAE government's educational emphasis on technology (Alhumaid, 2014).

Engin (2014) also emphasized that the flipped classroom is well suited to UAE educational institutions because mobile learning is often part of the educational delivery. Even over a decade ago, a small study conducted at Zayed University (UAE) found that female students “spent as much time on the internet as they did in combined activities of reading magazines, newspapers and books and twice as much time on the internet as they did shopping or visiting, face-to-face, with friends” (Walters et al., 2003, p. 187). Finally, student reports on their experiences of flipped classroom in a Zayed University English class were positive, with students reporting overwhelming positive comments regarding the out-of-class, online component of the course (Engin & Donanci, 2014a; Engin & Donanci, 2016b).

Flipped classroom and UAE female students. While a popular argument for using the flipped classroom approach is creating a student-centered environment where students are expected to take responsibility for their learning, there is a potential danger of excluding students who have limited time or online access issues or both (Bergman & Sams, 2012; Findlay-Thompson, 2015; Han, 2015; Kim et al., 2014; Overmyer, 2014).

Due to potential obstacles of gender role responsibilities that can lead to problems in attendance, completing course requirements, and completing programs of study, could

the flipped classroom approach become an impediment to UAE female students, who as a population are more likely to have increased family responsibilities and less time to study?

Keene (2013) suggests that flipping a class may actually benefit busy students who have the option of working ahead, working at their own pace, and reviewing videos as needed. Smaller lectures or question-and-answer sessions can be built in to class time to review concepts (Engin & Donanci, 2014a; Keene, 2013). Additional class time, or allowing more time outside of class, can also be allotted for students to watch videos that were to be completed prior to coming to class (McCrea, 2016; Overmyer, 2014). For students who lack internet access at home, videos can be directly uploaded to students' iPads or MP4 players (McCrea, 2016). The key is to provide flexibility so students who have time or access issues or both are able to view out-of-class content. Finally, when using flipped classroom with UAE female college students, Engin and Donanci (2016) recommended that both outside-of-class video lectures and instructor revision at the beginning of each class following a video lecture should be provided. Engin and Donanci (2016) stated that, more than just a lack-of-time issue for students, their UAE students did not have the confidence to rely on the video alone and wanted both the video and instructor explanations during class time. Additionally, during this revision session, learning goals could be reinforced, and structure for the day's activities introduced, creating a blend of traditional and flipped components (Engin & Donanci, 2014a; Kim et al., 2014).

Summary. While nascent research for the use of a flipped classroom approach in Western social work education appears promising, there is less of a historical basis for

the use of SCL and a flipped classroom approach in Eastern educational settings. This could lead to potential problems of student involvement and negative student perception. And while the UAE Ministry of Education has increasingly encouraged competency-based education and the use of technology in education, time and access issues of the flipped class activities need to be considered in regard to UAE female students.

Strengths, Limitations, and Design Considerations of a Flipped Classroom

Approach

Strengths, limitations, and design considerations of using a flipped classroom approach, along with specific research examples, will be discussed next.

Strengths of a flipped classroom approach. Research does support that students like learning in a flipped classroom and may like it better than learning in a traditional classroom (Bishop & Verleger, 2013; Danker, 2015; Egbert, Herman, & Lee, 2015; Han, 2015; Sage & Sele, 2015). Through the increased opportunities both to engage in self-paced learning and to apply knowledge during class, the flipped classroom appears to provide the learner with numerous opportunities to integrate course concepts with practical application. This can lead to deeper connections and better transfer of knowledge from the classroom to the field of practice (Danker, 2015; Holmes et al., 2015).

Online components. In addition to this extra time to provide interactive and collaborative activities, the flipped classroom's use of different medians to present information, such as online or group work, possibly engages more students and encourages student ownership of learning (Bergman & Sams, 2012; Mason, Shuman, & Cook, 2013; Sage and Sele, 2015). The traditional lecture is often whittled down to meet

video length requirements, or as Arnold-Garza (2014) explains, instructors may need to “distill down their topics and rid them of extraneous information” (p.2). Thus, topics may also be better organized to help students comprehend and integrate ideas through chunking or breaking one video into several subtopics (Arnold-Garza, 2014). This can also help students in content-heavy courses, courses with intense vocabulary, or courses taught in another language (Feledichuck & Wong, 2014; Mason et al., 2013; Overmyer, 2014). At-risk students can possibly benefit from the opportunities to study at their own pace and from the diversity of pedagogical approaches often used with a flipped classroom (Mok, 2014). Mok (2014) adds that weaker students have the benefit of repetition and can listen to lectures more than once. This same benefit applies to second-language learners. Feledichuck and Wong (2014) argue that second-language learners often cannot keep up with the pace of a traditional lecture, but a flipped format allows them time to comprehend information at their own pace. Additionally, a flipped classroom provides second-language learners, who are practicing communication skills, the opportunity to go back and review to improve fluency and comprehension (Fallows, 2013; Han, 2015;). Indeed, research indicates that online lectures may be more effective than in-class, in-person lectures (Bishop & Verleger, 2013; Holmes et al., 2015).

Finally, while internet accessibility can be a drawback, in university settings students usually have access to computer labs. More importantly, most students have already incorporated technology into their lives (Danker, 2015; Holmes et al., 2015). They can access educational materials on a variety of devices, which makes learning more accessible (Bishop & Verleger, 2013; Engin, 2014; Fallows, 2013; Holmes et al., 2015).

Creation of videos. Instructors also have a wide number of technological tools available to assist with designing and implementing a flipped classroom. Zappe, Leicht, Messner, Litzinger, and Lee (2009) suggested several types of software that could be used to create videos, including Adobe Captivate, Camtasia, and UltraVNC Screen Recorder, and noted that online, learning-management systems like Blackboard make for easy upload and use of materials. Building in reflection tools to online and classroom components of a flipped classroom allows students time and space to connect concepts and make sense of what they are learning (Arnold-Garza, 2014; Strayer, 2012). These tools could include online quizzes or journaling.

Class-based activities. Through moving the knowledge portion of a course outside of class, class time is freed for approaches that can be subsumed under the umbrella of SCL or activities in which students are actively engaged (Bishop & Verleger, 2013; Wolfe, 2008).

The most important benefit of the class activities is the increase in interactions (Overmyer, 2014). Students from an undergraduate business course for example, reported they believed they had more in-class opportunities to ask and answer questions in a flipped classroom (Findlay-Thompson & Mombourquette, 2015). For interactions to increase, however, the role of the instructor must change. The role of the teacher shifts from instructive to facilitator, allowing the teacher the possibility of interacting with each student, correcting mistakes or misconceptions as they happen, and helping students reach a higher level of understanding of the course material (Arnold-Garza, 2014; Bergman & Sams, 2012; Overmyer, 2014).

The class-based group work skills also assist with the development of soft skills, or skills needed in the workplace, and those needed for a global workforce. These include such skills as public speaking, critical thinking, problem solving, and communication (Joanne & Lateef, 2014; Overmyer, 2014; Ravenscroft & Luhanga, 2014). Joanne and Lateef (2014) investigated twelve case studies at Asian universities in nine Asian countries where flipped classroom had been used. Student feedback indicated students wanted the soft skills gained from flipped classroom, which they perceived could help with their success in other areas of the world. Ravenscroft and Luhanga (2014) also reported an increase in opportunities for students to develop work-ready or employment skills in their flipped classes. Finally, Sage and Sele (2015) reported improved student reflective skills, which led to deeper and more meaningful classroom discussions in a flipped social work class.

The flipped classroom can also provide a framework for the contextualization of knowledge and skills through its use of active-learning techniques such as collaborative learning, case-based learning, and problem-based learning (Mishra, R., 2014; Filatova, 2015). SCL activities can be tailored to the cultural context so students can “understand their experiences in relationship to the topic” (Saboe-Wounded Head, 2014, p. 25). Important to social work is addressing social problems and needs. By incorporating relevant community knowledge in SCL activities, the flipped class approach provides a conduit for student learning of emerging societal needs and the dynamic social environment in which these needs arise (Hair & O’Donoghue, 2009; Veeran, 2013). This relevant community knowledge is brought to the social work classroom and incorporated in flipped class activities such as case-based and problem-based learning projects.

In summary, the literature indicates that student opinion was mostly positive in regard to the flipped classroom, and teachers reported students tended to come to class better prepared (Bishop & Verleger, 2013; Egbert et al., 2015). Additionally, the flipped class approach of emphasizing class-based activities would seem to fit well with social work education's emphasis on applied learning. Finally, this approach appears to provide more opportunities for second-language learners to collaborate and use the second or target language as they participate in authentic activities (Holmes et al., 2015; Mehring, 2016).

Potential problems and design considerations of a flipped classroom

approach. In this section, problems of implementing a flipped class approach and ways to mitigate these problems will be discussed.

Lack of SCL and flipped class understanding. What happens when students do not understand what a flipped class is or what their responsibilities are? Students can experience anxiety and discomfort and have difficulties with autonomy and completion of tasks (Burt, 2004; Richardson, 2004; Vassall-Fall, 2011). Additionally, if students do not understand the technology or how to access the out-of-class components, they may feel overwhelmed and anxious by the technology (Holmes et al., 2015). Provision of an orientation to the flipped class and SCL can help students know what to expect. For example, Holmes et al. (2015) recommended student training on how to use technologies and an introduction to the course structure. This could be done through an orientation and ongoing technological support for students who have difficulty adapting to the technologies. This recommendation is supported by Findlay-Thompson and Mombourquette (2015), who also recommended a flipped class orientation to explain to

students what a flipped classroom entails and the instructor's expectations for student learning.

Alignment of in-class and out-of-class components. The merging or alignment of in-class and out-of-class components could also be problematic and was cited as one of the primary problems to implementing a flipped classroom successfully (Findlay-Thompson & Mombourquette, 2015; Kim et al., 2014; Strayer, 2012; Zappe et al., 2009). Even motivated, involved students can find it difficult to make connections between online lectures and in-class activities (Kim et al., 2014; Strayer, 2012). Strayer (2012) suggested that a traditional class tended to be more focused and provided a more supportive environment for students to make connections to the concepts. The author underscored the need for the instructor to build connections intentionally between online and in-class activities (Strayer, 2012). Engin and Donanci (2014) recommended incorporating a question-and-answer session or mini revision session at the beginning of each class session in their second-language classroom. In other words, provide *both* online content and a summary from the instructor in the following in-class session. The authors speculated that the videos acted as a summary of main teaching points for students. This stimulated student questions and discussions during class activities and helped learners make connections (Engin & Donanci, 2016b).

Lack of instructor experience. Problems with lack of instructor experience in a flipped classroom, specifically in active-learning, or cooperative-learning techniques, were reported by Overmyer (2014) and Findlay & Mombourquette (2014). Both studies reported no grade differences between traditional and flipped classroom, when the

instructor had limited, or, no experience with a flipped classroom's active-learning strategies.

Lack of learner motivation. While flipped class studies indicate positive student feedback about the approach, the flipped classroom may not be as effective with first-year students due to limited investment in program of study (Arnold-Garza, 2014; Strayer, 2012). To consider this another way, the flipped classroom does require student ownership of learning and autonomy, as new material or what was traditionally taught as in-class lectures is now done online outside of the classroom. This can also be problematic for students who are less motivated learners or for younger students who do not have a deep connection to or understanding of the subject and need more structure to connect learning activities with course concepts (Sinouvassane & Nalini, 2016; Strayer, 2012). As Casim and Yong-Chil (2013) argue, online learners have to be able to self-regulate their learning and use effective learning skills to be successful.

Yet flipped classroom pedagogy in non-Western cultures may prove to be less effective with more seasoned students. Sinouvassane & Nalini (2016) studied a group of year-three, Malaysian health science students and found they preferred face-to-face lectures, as this was viewed as simpler than having to take initiative to watch course content online. As Wolfe (2008) points out, however, resistance is to be expected anywhere when introducing new pedagogies, as students are being asked to do what is not familiar or comfortable. Thus, preparing the learner through the use of an orientation or other means of learner preparation is underscored again (Findlay-Thompson & Mombourquette, 2015).

Technology issues. Other potential problems include online connectivity outside of the classroom. Not all students have access to the internet, especially in rural areas. Yet a main component of the flipped pedagogy is the use of technology to enable students to access lecture and new material anywhere outside the classroom (Findlay-Thompson & Mombourquette, 2015.). As Miller (2012) points out, “lack of technology doesn’t necessarily close the door to the flipped classroom model, but it might require some intentional planning and differentiation” (para. 5). Then there are students who have access but do not watch the videos. As Mok (2014) contends, flipped classroom fails if students come to class without preparation or watching the online lectures. Thus, designing a backup plan for students to watch the videos on campus or at the beginning of class is recommended (Holmes et al., 2015; Sinouvassane & Nalini, 2016).

Ensuring the technology is easy to use and locate is also important (Kim et al., 2014). This could include ensuring students are able to and understand how to access content on a variety of devices such as smartphones or tablets (Kim et al., 2014; McCrea, 2016).

Poor quality videos, such as those with too much background noise, were also considered problematic, with recommendations that instructors ensure they have access to proper software (Mok, 2014; Overmyer, 2014). This points to the additional need for adequate instructor training. Training is needed not just for technologies and creation of videos, but also for SCL and how to structure class time successfully (Danker, 2015; Findlay-Thompson & Mombourquette, 2015; Holmes et al., 2015; Overmyer, 2014).

Extra time needed. Training and preparation needed to incorporate the flipped class take extra time. Preparation of videos and class activities and alignment of these

components were considered time consuming and, at times, more time consuming than traditional classes (Han, 2015; Engin, 2014; Holmes et al., 2015; Mok, 2014; Zhao & Hoa, 2014; Zappe et al., 2009). Overmyer (2014) explained the work that took place the semester before his flipped classroom was launched to include creating thirty videos through the use of Camtasia, screen-capture software, a webcam, and a USB microphone. Han (2015) added that planning for the flipped classroom increased her online, class-preparation time by four hours per day. Holmes et al. (2014) concurred with the importance of preplanning and the amount of time needed, but added that additional time is needed for faculty to learn how to use new technologies to create the flipped classrooms. The authors added that more research is needed to understand if the amount of time required to both plan and implement flipped classroom is justified by student achievement and learning (Holmes et al., 2015).

Summary. Alignment issues of in-class and out-of-class components, possible ineffectiveness with some students, online connectivity issues, the amount of time needed to both implement and participate in a flipped classroom, or access of material outside of class are all potential problems or limitations of a flipped classroom approach.

Methodology

An overview of the methodical paradigm, framework research design, and methods will be discussed next. This discussion will include a closer inspection of qualitative research and its applicability to this study.

Methodological Framework

Action research was chosen as the methodological framework of this study.

Action research is research that is conducted by educators or others with a vested interest

in improving practice (Mertler, 2014). As the focus of this research was to understand obstacles experienced by students and faculty in a second-language learning environment, and use this understanding in the creation of a flipped classroom, action research provided a flexible framework to create changes based on the collection and analysis of data, and incorporate these changes in the research design (Zuber-Skerritt, 2001). As Mack (2010) points out, action research “deliberately intervenes in the research setting to achieve change or improvement” (p. 8). Additionally, as McNiff (2010) argues, action research is “situated and always contextualized” (p. 23). In other words, action research as a framework is concerned with the specific context and problems encountered within that context. Action research, then, is a logical methodology to study a problem of practice in which understanding culture-specific obstacles is important to improve instruction (Dana & Hoppey-Yendol, 2014).

Action research follows four iterative steps to include: (1) the planning stage; (2) the acting stage, which includes data collection and analysis of collected data; (3) the developing stage which includes the development of an action plan to provide future cycles of the research and; (4) critical reflection of the process to include reflection on the action research process as well as dissemination of the findings (Mertler, 2014). Mertler (2014) emphasizes the cyclical nature of action research and suggests a particular action research study may have several cycles or be repeated several times.

Additionally, action research provides a framework that incorporates both the reflections of the researcher as well as the systematic and rigorous process of research (Mertler, 2014). Indeed, reflection was incorporated throughout this action research study through the use of a research journal. A research journal served as a data set that

contained reflections on my research role that brought clarity to problems, provided interpretation and meaning, as well as documented design and implementation issues and strengths (Janesick, 1999; Kim et al., 2014; Strayer, 2012).

However, journaling may have other benefits in cross-cultural teaching settings. Lin and Schwartz (2003) point out gaps in the literature regarding the importance of reflection in cross-cultural situations. They provided recommendations for reflection that included specificity of what is being reflected upon. Through implementing systemic approaches to journaling such as using specific questions to guide reflection and setting times during the week to complete reflections, a researcher may be less likely to impose his or her own meanings or assumptions on the research process (Kincheloe, 1995).

Finally, some examples of educational action research similar to the goals of this study are described here. Ritchie (2013) implemented literature circles that included reading diverse ethnographies to encourage culturally responsive behaviors among preservice teachers and develop a community of learners. During the developing stage, preservice teachers developed their own action plans. Ritchie concluded that literature circles were valuable tools to increase multicultural awareness among preservice teachers. Alfallaj (2017) used action research to study the problem of low English proficiency levels in his college classroom at a Saudi university. Through studying the use of computer-assisted language learning (CALL) and comparing results with conventional teaching methods, Alfallaj was able to ascertain recommendations for a blended CALL and instructor approach that he theorized met the specific language learning needs of Arab learners. Ritchie (2013) and Alfallaj (2017) demonstrate the contextualized nature of action research yet also its wide range. Both studies sought to

address specific problems in practice in specific settings, yet one study addressed preservice teacher training while the other addressed a specific problem and need impacting students in an international setting.

In my action research study, I sought to gain an in-depth understanding of the perceived obstacles to learning and teaching experienced by faculty and students. I then changed my teaching approach by incorporating information from what I had learned from faculty and students in a flipped class approach.

Methodological Paradigm

This study sought to gain clarity and understanding of the cultural constraints experienced by both students and faculty teaching in a second-language learning environment. Yet another major theme of this study was also investigating the use of an alternative teaching approach, a flipped classroom, within a specific cultural context.

Qualitative research provided a logical method to study these issues as it “describes how a phenomenon works and why it works the way it does” (Patton, 2015, p. 18).

Specifically, what are the perceptions of obstacles or phenomena experienced by student and faculty? Why do these phenomena operate the way that they do? Thus, a qualitative design, for the purposes of this study, provided a means to gain in-depth insight on student and faculty perceptions and experiences. Qualitative research also provided an approach to understand the individual *meaning* persons or groups ascribe to their situations and give voice to their experiences (Creswell, 2014). In other words, the researcher does not ascribe meaning to the words of the participants, but rather “the researcher keeps a focus on learning the meaning that participants hold about the problem or issue” (Creswell, 2014, p. 186). Finally, as Yin (2016) emphasizes, qualitative research

provides methods to study the richness of a specific context. A key to this study was understanding the UAE second-language learning context, and obstacles and strengths within that context.

Research Design and Methods

Within an action research framework, an ethnographic qualitative research design was used to understand both obstacles to learning experienced by students and faculty in a second-language cultural context and how a flipped class approach could influence this specific environment. Ethnographic strategies are effective to help make sense of how people understand phenomena, and why they behave the way they do (Murchison, 2010). Patton (2015) adds that an ethnographic qualitative approach is one that seeks to describe how *culture* influences how participants think and behave, how they understand phenomena and/or change, and the influence of culture in relation to change. His definition of culture includes “any human group of people interacting together for a period of time. . . and who develop a collection of behavior patterns and beliefs” (Patton, 2015, p. 100). This definition can easily apply to students and faculty learning and teaching in a UAE college.

An ethnographic approach, predicated upon the sociocultural foundation of this study, provides clarity regarding social and cultural phenomena that shape the experiences of and connections between students and faculty both before and after an implementation of a flipped class (Creswell, 2014; Murchison, 2010). Finally, the research questions ultimately guided the selection of research methods. Murchison (2010) explains that ethnographic research questions do not simply seek answers that describe

phenomena but rather attempt to answer questions about why and how problems and/or phenomena exist within specific contexts (Murchison, 2010).

Next, the specific features and characteristics of qualitative ethnographic research methods will be reviewed to include the researcher as a participant observer, data collection, settings, reflexivity, and data analysis.

Participant-observer. During ethnographic research, the researcher becomes a participant observer, both immersed in the culture but also systematically observing the culture (Murchison, 2010; Patton, 2015). The researcher interacts with the participants and has “firsthand involvement with research participants” (Murchison, 2010, p. 4). This is because of the underlying ethnographic belief that the only way to understand persons within their environment is for the researcher to be *part of* the research, immersed in the cultural environment (Murchison, 2010; Patton, 2015). As Yin (2016) emphasizes, for the researcher, “real-world encounters dominate the field work” (p. 116). Thus, the researcher is the instrument for data collection (Creswell, 2014).

Multiple sources of data collection. Reeves, Peller, Goldman, and Kitto (2013) explain that ethnographic research gathers a range of data sources. These typically include interviews, document or artifact analysis, and field note observations. Additional data can include focus groups and informal conversations or interviews (Murchison, 2010). These multiple sources of data provide the opportunity to create rich detail about the setting, demonstrate the complexity of the group and/or phenomena being studied, and triangulate the data (Reeves et al., 2013). Triangulation is defined by Teddlie and Tashakkori (2009) as “the combinations and comparisons of multiple data sources, data collection and analysis procedures, research methods, investigators, and inferences that

occur at the end of a study” (p. 27). Opportunities for triangulation are increased through the use of more than one source for data collection and the comparisons of the data. In ethnographic research, detailed descriptions of the setting and phenomena are often described with the triangulated data to demonstrate a credible example of a cultural and/or social phenomena (Creswell & Poth, 2017; Murchison, 2010).

Research setting. Ethnographic research emphasizes the collection of data in naturalistic settings (Murchison, 2010; Patton, 2015; Reeves et al., 2013). This allows for the exploration of themes and categories that are most relevant to the participants. Additionally, the researcher is able to “experience events, behaviors, interactions and conversations that are manifestations of culture in action” (Murchison, 2010, p. 12). The description of the setting helps to demonstrate a sense of reality (Creswell & Poth, 2017).

Reflexivity. Patton (2015) argues that reflexivity in qualitative research is more than just reflection. It is the acknowledgement of the researcher of the bidirectional influence of the research process on both the researcher and the participants. Reflexivity is a self-reflection and disclosure of the researcher’s background, beliefs, values, and assumptions, and how these areas could impact how the researcher reports observations. Ultimately, it is the “analytical scrutiny of the self as researcher” (Patton, 2015, p. 70). Reflexivity provides readers with an avenue to decide how the researcher’s background could influence the study (Reeves et al., 2013).

Data analysis. Murchison (2010) reminds that qualitative research analysis is inductive or moves from the specific to the general through sorting, coding, and categorizing. Thematic coding analysis guides this process through the identification of patterns and categories from the raw data (Saldana, 2016). This process is “cyclical rather

than linear” (Saldana, 2016, p. 68) as data analysis, data collection, and the write-up of the analysis proceed together. To begin coding, the data is first prepared through transcribing audio recordings or typing handwritten field notes. This is followed by reflection on the data and coding or organizing the data by line, segment, or concept. The process includes categorizing or aggregating the data with similar data to assist in identifying major themes (Creswell, 2014; Saldana, 2016). Emergent categories or themes could include in vivo coding or using a word or phrase used by the participants to describe the category (Creswell, 2014). Other times, a priori coding is used or the creation of categories identified by the researcher ahead of time and most often associated with the constructs of the research questions (Saldana, 2016). Patterns can be displayed as narrative statements or a matrix display (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014). A final step is making an interpretation from the data and highlighting lessons learned (Creswell, 2014).

Challenges to qualitative ethnographic research and specific examples will be presented next.

Challenges to qualitative ethnographic research. Validity and reliability are two challenges for all research studies. Validity includes ensuring the accuracy of findings. To ensure qualitative validity, Creswell (2014) recommends specific validity strategies. These include triangulation or examining different data sources to investigate if the sources converge, member checking or checking with participants on the accuracy of the findings, the use of rich description in describing the findings and setting, and openly addressing bias through the process of reflexivity. Other strategies include

presenting discrepant information to demonstrate integrity and transparency and peer debriefing or using a peer to review the research (Creswell, 2014).

Reliability is concerned with the consistency of the research approach (Creswell, 2014). Strategies to increase reliability include providing a detailed protocol regarding procedures used. It also includes other strategies such as rechecking transcripts and ensuring there is not a drift in the code definitions. Use of a constant comparison method or constantly comparing data with codes and checking codes against definitions can reduce drift in the code definitions (Creswell, 2014). Creswell also recommends that a single researcher ask a peer to cross-check codes for intercoder agreement (Creswell, 2014, p. 203).

Examples of action research using a qualitative ethnographic approach.

Laszlo (2011) conducted an action research study using a longitudinal ethnographic approach to study school inclusion practices for students with developmental disabilities. In his role as a student support staff, he examined his own inclusive practices with two children. He systematically employed these practices and observed them during a seven-month period. Laszlo (2011) documented that his approaches helped students gain skills, although he could not establish a causal connection. Charbonneau-Gowdy (2015) used action research and qualitative ethnographic methods to study the use of e-readers among Chilean preservice teachers and observed changes in their literacy habits. Concerns with the low levels of literacy and English language skills of preservice teachers was the impetus of the study. Charbonneau-Gowdy (2015) paired the e-reader with guided linguistic feedback and concluded that preservice teachers did improve their literacy skills using e-readers.

Both studies highlighted using an innovative teaching approach within the framework of action research. Additionally, both studies explored the effects of these approaches through an ethnographic approach in which the researcher was a participant observer immersed in the educational environment. Action research using an ethnographic approach provided an effective method for the researchers to understand more fully the impact of culture and their interventions within their specific contexts.

Summary and Conclusion

What are the obstacles to learning among native-Arabic, female learners in an undergraduate social work course? A review of the literature indicated such issues as psychosocial factors related to societal and family gender roles. Other issues included a history of passive learning and lack of familiarity with student-centered, active-learning techniques. The lack of course contextualization and reliance on Western-based curriculum materials could also create problems. Obstacles to comprehension could include language issues and the differences between English and Arabic as well as culturally based pedagogical clashes between instructors and students (Al Issa, 2005; Gallagher, 2011). SCL and a flipped classroom viewed and modified through the lens of sociocultural and social constructivism theories could be used to address these issues.

While components of the flipped or inverted classroom pedagogical approach have been around for some time, the flipped classroom approach likely evolved from the rise of blended learning approaches in the last fifteen years (Arnold-Garza, 2014; Strayer, 2012). It was later popularized by secondary-school chemistry teachers Johnathan Bergman and Aaron Sams (2012) and has since gained recognition in other parts of the world.

In regard to implementing a flipped classroom, several prominent themes emerged from this literature review. Positive themes included favorable student perception of the flipped classroom and enhanced student engagement. Additionally, the flipped classroom appears to provide opportunities such as increased interaction in the target language for second-language learners, increased interaction between student and instructor, increased class time for active and application-based learning, and self-paced learning (Fallows, 2013; Mehring, 2016; Overmyer, 2014). These flipped class components appear to benefit second-language learners, as they provide opportunities to use authentic learning activities in the new language. Second-language learners also benefit from opportunities to replay the video portion of the lecture when needed (Fallows, 2013; Han, 2015).

Cautionary themes also emerged from the literature, particularly in regard to implementation of the flipped classroom. Careful, ongoing planning regarding alignment of in-class and out-of-class activities must take place to ensure meaningful and relevant learning experiences for students (Findlay-Thompson & Mombourquette, 2015; Kim et al., 2014; Strayer, 2012; Zappe et al., 2009). Communicating expectations and providing an orientation at the beginning of the semester were also viewed as important (Engin & Donanci, 2016b; Findlay-Thompson & Mombourquette, 2015; Holmes et al., 2015). Additionally, careful planning and training for faculty was emphasized, as well as extra time needed for adequate implementation (Han, 2015; Holmes et al., 2015; Mok, 2014; Zhao & Ho, 2014). For second-language learners and/or students who do not have a foundation of participatory learning, either a question-and-answer session could be implemented at the beginning of class or material from the videos should be briefly

revised (Engin, 2014; Engin & Donanci, 2014a; Richardson, 2004). Indeed, keys to ensuring a flipped approach include flexibility, contextualization, and access considerations when implementing a flipped approach (Egbert et al., 2015; Engin & Donanci, 2016b; Kim et al., 2014).

While there is limited research on a flipped classroom approach in social work, the flipped classroom, with its emphasis on active learning, appears to fit well with the emphasis in social work education on active and experiential learning (Holmes et al., 2015). Nascent research regarding flipped classroom and its use with second-language learners and with UAE second-language learners have reported successes particularly in the area of student perceptions of their learning. Use of flipped class technology was viewed as favorable to students in the UAE, due to UAE's use of technology in education and accessibility of learning (Engin, 2014).

Finally, a qualitative methodological paradigm that uses ethnographic methods best addresses the research questions and appears to fit well with the action research framework of this study (Creswell, 2014). A qualitative ethnographic approach is one in which understanding is viewed through a cultural lens (Murchison, 2010; Patton, 2015). Research methods include participant observation in which the researcher is an active participant in the research setting, ensuring the research is situated within its naturalistic setting, use of multiple sources of data collection, an emphasis on reflexivity and transparency regarding the research methods, and qualitative data analysis methods that focus on thematic analysis and the identification of themes.

The following chapter will provide a detailed explanation of the methodology used in this research study.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

This action research study first explored obstacles to learning in a second-language learning environment and then considered how a flipped classroom could support learning. The problem in practice that was addressed in this study was issues of comprehension and engagement of an English-based social work course among native-Arabic, second-language learners.

Problems of weak English and dependence on memorization create obstacles for students to gain necessary knowledge and skills. Problems can also include lack of engagement or connection with the material, which can create obstacles for students in understanding concepts and linking theory to practice. Understanding obstacles from both the perspective of the students and the instructors was addressed in the first phase of the study and answered the first two research questions of what were obstacles to learning identified by female, native-Arabic, English language learners and what were obstacles to learning and teaching identified by faculty teaching native-Arabic, English language learners.

The flipped classroom delivers the traditional lecture outside the classroom usually through electronic means, which frees class time for student-centered learning techniques that emphasize application of the learning (Arnold-Garza, 2014; Bergman & Sams, 2012; Egbert et al., 2015; Kim et al., 2014; Overmyer, 2014). The flipped

classroom is a Western approach that may not necessarily work with students from other countries and with different ways of learning (Filatova, 2015). Yet some recent research has indicated preliminary success with flipped classroom in the UAE classrooms (Engin, 2014; Engin & Donanci, 2014a; Engin & Donanci, 2016b; Fallows, 2013; Farah, 2014). Thus, the second phase of the study explored how a flipped class could be used to strengthen comprehension and engagement and addressed the two subquestions of this study: How can a flipped class be used to support comprehension and engagement among native-Arabic, English language learners, and how can a flipped class provide faculty who are non-Arabic speakers opportunities to support native-Arabic, English language learners? Data from Phase I was used to inform the implementation of Phase II.

Rationale for Methodology

Action research, and the four stages of planning, acting, developing, and reflecting, were the framework of this study. This framework provides a systematic yet iterative approach to continuously improve teaching practice and incorporate change. Yet it is more than just a series of inquiry steps (Hammond, 2013). Action research instead seeks to understand what would work best in a given context (Mertler, 2014). Indeed, action research uniquely blends theory with educational practice and provides opportunities for a bilateral flow of information between theory and classroom and classroom to development of theory and best practices (Mertler, 2014).

Additionally, as Zuber-Skerritt (2001) suggests, “‘Action Research’ is a cyclical iterative process of action and reflection on and in action” (p. 2). Thus, it provides a framework that incorporates *both* the reflections of the researcher as well as the systematic and rigorous process of research (Mertler, 2014). Indeed, not only sharing

results but a deeper reflection on what worked, what did not, and modifications to further contextualize a flipped classroom approach were important steps in the action research cycle for this study. As Mertler (2014) emphasizes, action research is not just solving problems, but it also involves trying something new and then critically reflecting on the effectiveness of this new change. This reflection guides the next cycle.

Finally, this study followed the tenets of action research to learn what worked best in a specific context. Applying a flipped classroom while studying different facets of a flipped classroom implementation provided insight on what components worked and what components may need to be modified for future cycles. The bilateral flow of information between the theoretical foundations of sociocultural theory and social constructivism and the practical application of a flipped classroom, allowed for theory to inform practice and for practice to inform theory. This in turn honored the sociocultural underpinnings of this study that the construction of knowledge happens within the social context of the environment and not independent of it (Adams, P., 2006; Bashir-Ali, 2011; Nunan & Bailey, 2009).

Next, I will discuss how the four stages of action research were implemented in this research study. During the planning stage, the action research plan was finalized and approvals received. Approvals were sought from the University of South Carolina, Institutional and Review Board for Human Research (IRB), and the UAE technical college system (See Appendices L, M, and N for research permissions). Also during the planning stage, electronic materials were created and class activities designed and prepared.

During the acting stage, a qualitative methodology was used to explore the problems or obstacles to learning and the effect of a flipped classroom on student engagement and comprehension. A qualitative methodology was deemed best as the in-depth information provided through qualitative data such as student interviews, transcriptions of portions of the flipped class, and field notes could be used to gauge a deeper, more multifaceted understanding of the obstacles to learning and the effect of a flipped classroom. Student interviews and faculty focus groups, for example, provided rich information on the experiences, motivations, meaning, and/or perceptions of the research topics (Diccico-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006; Gill, Stewart, Treasure, & Chadwick, 2008).

Building on the theoretical foundation of this study, that learning happens within the social and cultural context of the environment, an *ethnographic qualitative* approach was used in order to consider the influence of the social and cultural environment (Patton, 2015). Through my role as a participant observer, for example, both immersed in the setting as well as observing and collecting data, I was able to discover firsthand questions as well as meanings ascribed to activities and gain a deeper understanding of how the cultural and social context shaped the experiences of students and faculty (Murchison, 2010). This understanding of obstacles and competing cultural and educational demands experienced by both students and faculty were best explored through a methodology that viewed problems, and the later implementation of a culturally different teaching approach, through a cultural lens (Adams, P., 2006; Bashir-Ali, 2011; Murchison, 2010; Nunan & Bailey, 2009; Patton, 2015). Additionally, in regard to student perceptions of a flipped classroom approach, as Joanne & Lateef (2014), supported by Veeran (2013) and

Vassall-Fall (2011) argue, in regions of the world such as Asia and the Middle East, students have traditionally relied on the teacher as the sole source of information. Understanding how students adapted to a traditionally Western teaching approach was best explored using a methodology that again focused on the influence of culture (Murchison, 2010; Patton, 2015).

Yet potential issues can arise when assuming a participant observer role in a familiar setting. Brewer (2000) (as cited in Laszlo, 2011) defines the role of a participant observer in a familiar setting as pure observant participation. Potential limitations to this role include my own biases and preconceptions that I bring from my previous experiences in this environment. These preconceptions were monitored through the use of a research journal. Weekly transcriptions of question-and-answer sessions, teacher research journal, and field notes provided additional detail needed for teaching and implementing new techniques in a cross-cultural setting.

The developing stage included the preparation of an action plan. This plan was created to continue the cycle of investigating the use of the flipped classroom as a relevant teaching strategy for social work courses. As recommended by Mok (2014), ongoing trials of flipped classroom should be considered for appropriate courses. Finally, during reflecting, the results were disseminated locally to the college system research committee, social work faculty, and health sciences administration. As mentioned, personal reflections were also part of the data set through the use of a research journal, which provided potential insight on how native-English-speaking social work faculty could use the flipped classroom to improve engagement among second-language learners. The journal helped to clarify my observations, thoughts, ideas, and assumptions, and to

explore the question: How can English speaking faculty use the flipped classroom approach to support student engagement among second-language (Arabic) learners? The journal was also used to address possible interaction of cultures such as a Western teacher researching the use of a student-centered, Western teaching technique in a culture other than her own (Janesick, 1999; Kim et al., 2014; Strayer, 2012).

Role of the Researcher

Herr and Anderson (2015) suggest that a researcher should always ask, “Who am I in relationship to my participants and my setting?” (p. 57). This is a particularly important issue in action research due to the researcher’s position or role inside the research study (Herr & Anderson, 2015). For the purpose of this action research study, I had more than one role or position.

First, I was an insider and assumed the role of investigating my own teaching practice. I designed the study, taught the courses, and conducted the action research study. Herr and Anderson (2015) address problems that can occur when assuming a lone-insider role. These include blind spots or possible biases when analyzing findings. Building in methods of self-reflection to include ongoing awareness of my position in the study was important to uncover biases and blind spots (Herr & Anderson, 2015).

Other roles I assumed included collaborative insider and cultural outsider. I am a collaborative insider as I am part of the social work faculty at the institution where this research took place. I also worked with the social work faculty who assisted with translation of interview questions and responses. Conversely, I am a cultural outsider as I am a Western teacher teaching in an international teaching environment. Thus, there are

always potential dangers that my cultural perspective could interfere with the research process (Brayboy & Deyhle, 2000).

To increase my self-awareness and decrease the dangers of bias and the interference of my own cultural perspectives and worldview, ongoing self-reflection was essential (Yin, 2016). This was accomplished through the use of a research reflection journal. Additional safeguards, such as member checking, peer debriefing, and cross-checking of coded data, were used to address lack of objectivity that can occur when events are interpreted differently or in a culturally biased way (Brayboy & Deyhle, 2000; Mertler, 2014).

Setting Description

This study took place at a federally funded college in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). The college has an enrollment of 3,179 students and is part of a college system made up of campuses located throughout the United Arab Emirates (HCT, 2017). As stated in Chapter 1, college education is free for Emirati nationals, and only Emirati Nationals attend federally funded institutions. Additionally, all federally funded colleges and universities are segregated by gender.

The colleges offer a mixture of applied and vocational bachelor degrees and diplomas. The social work bachelor's program is part of the health sciences division. This program is offered at two campuses, in two different emirates. Students entering the program may have spent approximately one to four semesters in the Foundation program to prepare them for bachelor degree admissions requirements. Foundation courses mostly include English and math. To move to a bachelor's degree program, students must achieve a certain score on the English qualifying exam, International English Language

Testing System (IELTS), or an accepted equivalency (HCT, 2017). Students entering the social work program have obtained this needed IELTS score or equivalency. Yet problems with oral and/or written communication are common among students (Goodwin, 2013; Shukri, 2014).

Teaching faculty in the college system and social work program are mostly expatriate, 85% and 95% respectively (HCT, 2018). Similar to the college system at large, the social work faculty is multinational with faculty from different areas of the world such as Africa, Europe and North America.

The teaching and learning mission of the college is student centered and emphasizes experiential learning. Yet, as Crabtree (2010) argues, students coming to the college from public or state schools were more likely to have learned in teacher-centered environments that emphasized memorization as key learning strategies. Instructors are strongly encouraged to use student-centered approaches, yet implementing these strategies can be challenging and “takes place in a cultural and educational environment where students and staff often perceived each other across ethnic, cultural, and socio-religious divides, creating a challenge to all parties” (Crabtree, 2010, p. 88).

However, despite these challenges, experiential techniques that require application are essential in social work education to help students learn and practice necessary skills and gain competencies (Altshuler & Bosch, 2003; Garthwait, 2015). A Social Work Family course was chosen for this study because skills development is part of the course learning outcomes and the flipped approach could possibly assist students in mastering the course outcomes. Although the course is a three-credit-hour course, this course, like all college classes, meets four hours a week in two-hour increments during

the week. This is due to the second-language learning environment in which additional time is provided for students to learn in a second language. Per college policies, all courses are taught in English.

My position at the college is that of social work faculty and social work program coordinator. These current positions include teaching the required three-credit-hour courses as well as facilitating the development of the social work courses and curriculum modifications. This study dovetails with my responsibilities as program coordinator in identifying and implementing innovative teaching strategies and collaborating with other faculty to do the same.

The following discussion will parallel the implementation of this action research study and will be organized according to Phase I and Phase II.

Phase I Research Design and Methods

Gilson (2012) suggests that action research includes both gathering information and knowledge about a particular system while at the same time attempting change based on that knowledge. The two phases of this action research study align with Gilson's description through first exploring obstacles to learning and then applying a flipped classroom to understand the influence of this approach on student engagement and comprehension.

Design Summary

In Phase I, ethnographic qualitative methods were used to answer research questions 1 and 2 regarding obstacles to engagement and comprehension. Interviews were conducted with five selected students who would be part of the flipped class. Semistructured interviews using open-ended questions were used to gather information

from students regarding perceived obstacles in a second-language environment (Findlay & Mombequette, 2015; Kim et al., 2014) (See Appendix A for interview questions.) Due to varying levels of English among the students, a faculty member who was a native-Arabic speaker was present with this researcher during student interviews to ensure that the students fully understood the questions and that their responses were interpreted accurately.

Eight faculty volunteers were also recruited to participate in a focus group and provide their perceptions of obstacles to learning and teaching (see Appendix C for faculty focus group interview questions). A Phase I overview is presented here.

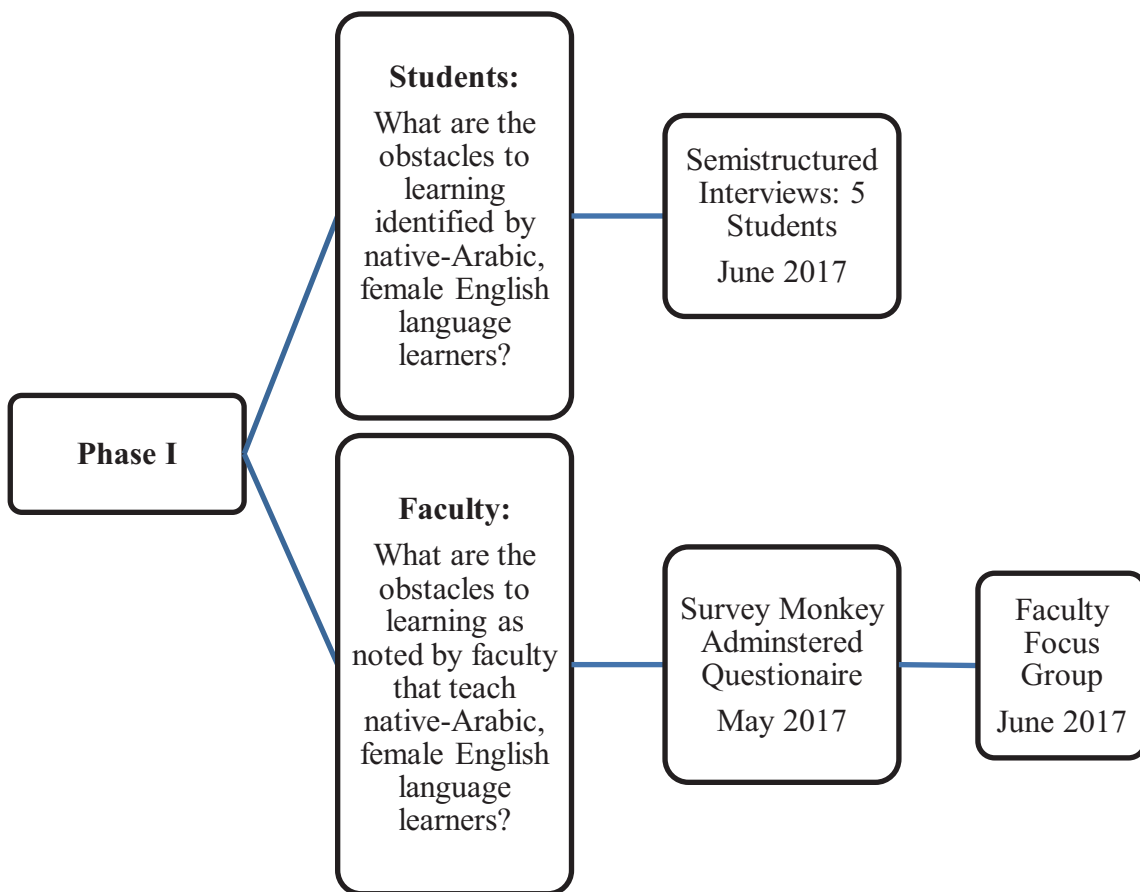


Figure 3.1 Phase I Overview

Questions used in the focus group were derived from a brief faculty open-ended-question survey, administered online through Survey Monkey (see Appendix B for survey questions and responses). Survey responses were used to generate focus group questions.

A semistructured interview format was used with both student volunteers and the faculty focus group. This is a format in which predetermined open-ended questions are asked of each participant, but the interviewer or participant can deviate and/or ask follow-up questions can be asked in order to gain more information or insight about an idea or response (Diccico-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006; Gill et al., 2008).

Participants and Sampling

The sample for this study was a purposive sample, or nonprobability sampling in which random selection is not possible, and the sample was selected for a specific purpose (Trochim, 2006). As Creswell (2014) points out, researchers using qualitative methods purposefully select samples “that will best help the researcher understand the problem and the research question” (p. 189).

Student participants. Five student volunteers were recruited to be interviewed before and after the flipped class. These students met the following criteria. They would be part of the fall 2017 flipped course, Social Work with Families. Recruitment considerations included asking students of different ages, motherhood and ability statuses to be interviewed to gain possible alternative perspectives of obstacles to learning. These same students were also part of the large class qualitative sample the following semester. Written permission was obtained prior to the interviews. All interviews were conducted orally and used both audio file and written documentation.

Translator. Due to varying levels of English, a translator was present during student interviews. The translator was a social work faculty member who has knowledge of the social work courses and course material. As this faculty member taught at a different campus, Zoom conferencing was used. The translator was asked prior to the interviews to translate only the questions asked by the researcher and student responses, because as Squires (2009) asserts, inconsistent use of an interpreter can threaten the trustworthiness of a qualitative study.

Faculty Participants. Eight faculty volunteers were recruited to participate in an open-ended-question survey and focus group. Faculty were recruited based on the following characteristics: non-Arabic speakers, diversity of experience teaching in a second-language learning environment, and teaching social work or other health sciences students. As this study explored obstacles to learning among second-language learners, a potential obstacle could be an instructor who would not be able to translate vocabulary from English to Arabic. Thus, faculty were asked based their status as non-native Arabic speakers. Additionally, experience or lack of experience could potentially mitigate or exacerbate second language learning issues. Thus faculty were also selected based on experience teaching in a second-language learning environment. Finally, whether a faculty had taught or would potentially teach social work students or other health sciences students were part of the selection criteria.

Faculty participants had a range of experiences teaching in second-language environments. Experience ranged from one year to thirteen years. Four out of eight faculty participants completed a survey administered via Survey Monkey prior to the

focus group. Responses garnered from this survey were used to develop focus group questions. Seven out of eight of the participants participated in the faculty focus group.

Research Methods

Methods to answer research questions 1 and 2. Prior to data collection and implementation of this research, formal permission to pursue this research was obtained from the college system research committee and the Health Sciences Division Chair at the site where the research would take place (see Appendices L, M and N for approval letters).

Phase I, was implemented during the summer session in June of 2017. The summer sessions are short, 4-week sessions in which students usually take one course only. Phase I was also during Ramadan, when the college decreases working and teaching hours due to the Muslim tradition of fasting, or not eating or drinking, during daylight hours. Students and faculty were typically on campus a minimum of three hours and maximum five hours.

During Phase I, obstacles to learning were studied through a faculty questionnaire, faculty focus group, and semistructured interviews with five students who would be part of the flipped class during the fall 2017 semester.

Question development for Phase I student interviews, faculty survey, faculty focus group, and Phase II post student interviews followed guidance provided by Yin (2016). Yin (2016) describes the development and delivery of qualitative questions as protocols or a “broad line of inquiry” (p. 141) as opposed to a script. These protocols each provide evidence and connection towards the research questions. Indeed, the unique perspective of how and what participants viewed as obstacles to learning within what

Goodwin (2013) refers to as “the social and cultural context of everyday” (p. 71) was the basis of the questions. The qualitative approach used throughout Phase I and Phase II post student interviews helped me to understand and collect these unique perspectives.

Eight faculty were initially recruited to complete the faculty questionnaire and participate in the faculty focus group. As mentioned, faculty were recruited based on whether they were non-native Arabic speakers, diversity of teaching in a second-language learning environment and whether they taught or would teach social work or health sciences student.

First, faculty completed a two-question, open-ended-question survey which was used to develop protocols for a faculty focus group (see Appendix B). Four out of seven focus group members completed the survey. Wolff, Knodel, and Sittitrai (1993) describe how surveys and focus groups can complement each other; the focus group can clarify or elaborate on the findings of a survey (Wolff et al., 1993). From the survey question themes, eight broad questions or protocols were identified and developed (see Appendix C for faculty focus group questions).

Seven out of eight faculty recruited for the survey and focus group participated in the faculty focus group. The focus group met during early afternoon in an empty classroom at the college. The group met for approximately 90 minutes. I asked an initial open question and allowed the group to answer and respond to each other. Follow-up questions were often more specific and used to garner more focused responses (Gill et al., 2008). I encouraged members who were quiet to share by directing follow-up questions to them (Gill et al., 2008). Responses were captured via an audio file and my notes.

Five students were also interviewed who would be part of the flipped class. Scheduling times to meet with the students presented several challenges due to shorter college hours and transportation issues of some of the students. It was important to identify times when students were on campus, not in class, yet not so late in the day for fasting to have significantly influenced their energy levels. Additionally, two of the five students come to the college by college bus, thus further limiting times available for the interviews. The translator, a first-language Arabic social work faculty member, was also present on her campus only three hours per day. Due to these timing constraints, student interviews were combined in two groups. Thomas (2008) differentiates group interviews from focus groups by the level of interaction encouraged between group members. Group interviews, such as the student interviews in this study, focus on the questions delivered by the researcher and less on the interaction between the participants.

Interviews were conducted at 1:00 p.m. on two consecutive days. On day one, students Amna and Bakhita were interviewed. The interview lasted approximately 45 minutes. On day two, students Cala, Dalal, and Eiman were interviewed. The interviews lasted approximately one hour. Questioning followed the same process. I asked all students the same question, followed by the oral translation of the question from the translator. Follow-up questions depended upon the student responses. The laptop was placed in the center of a work table so students could see and hear the translator. Responses of each student and translator were captured on an audio file. Four out of five students mostly responded to questions in a mixture of Arabic and English. One student answered questions in English only.

Information gathered from the focus group and student interviews was used to inform, develop and modify the Phase II flipped classroom (see Appendix A).

Data Collection Tools

Phase I data collection tools included student interviews, an open-question faculty survey, and a faculty focus group.

Student Interviews. Student interview data was collected to answer Research Question 1, which considered obstacles to learning identified by the students. This data provided an understanding of the obstacles experienced by the learner within a specific sociocultural context (Adams, P., 2006; Bashir-Ali, 2011; Nunan & Bailey, 2009). The interview format was a series of open-ended questions in a semistructured format that provided the option of following up with alternative questions (Mertler, 2014). (See Appendix A). The use of open-ended questions during the interviews provided participants opportunities to answer freely and describe their experiences (Findlay-Thompson & Mombourquette, 2015).

Safeguards to minimize the possible misinterpretation of the interview data due to differences in language and culture included the presence of a translator to ensure that students fully understood the questions and that I understood their responses. Additional safeguards included member checking or sharing interview and observation notes with participants (Mertler, 2014). All interviews were captured through the use of an audio file and were transcribed within 48 hours of the interview.

Faculty survey. The faculty survey and follow-up faculty focus group were used to answer Research Question 2, which considered obstacles to learning and teaching identified by faculty. Faculty who agreed to participate in the faculty focus group were

requested, through email, to answer two open-questions regarding obstacles encountered during instruction of second-language learners (see Appendix B for faculty survey questions and responses). The survey was administered through Survey Monkey. Based on the survey responses, broad questions were developed that were used with a focus group that consisted of seven non-Arabic-speaking faculty volunteers. Kumar (2006) explains that mini surveys can be used to develop questions as well as “sharpen study questions” (p. 3).

Faculty focus group. A focus group was selected as a data collection tool and used to answer the second research question of obstacles to learning and teaching within a second-language environment. A focus group provided greater opportunities for interactions among faculty during the group process and generated additional perceptions and thoughts due to “tendency for people to feed off others’ comments” (Mertler, 2014, p.132), or as Yin (2016) suggests, some people will express themselves more in groups than individually. Yet Thomas (2008) goes further to argue that focus groups typically take place within the natural setting and allow for more natural discussions in which participants can “conceptualize the research topic within their own cultural frameworks through group interactions and discussions” (p. 79). Thus, similar to the student interview data, the focus group data provided a way to understand perceptions of faculty regarding learning and teaching obstacles within their specific teaching context. Seven out of eight faculty members invited to participate in the faculty focus group participated. Questions based on the survey were asked in a semistructured format that allowed participants to elaborate on their answers. This session was captured through the use of an audio file as

well as notes taken during the session. The session was transcribed within 48 hours of the focus group.

Timeline for Data Collection Methods

The table below provides an overview of each data collection tool, research question being addressed, and timeline for Phase I.

Table 3.1 Timeline for Phase I Data Collection

Data Collection Tool	Research Question Addressed	Timeline
Student Interviews	1. What are the obstacles to learning identified by native-Arabic, female English language learners?	Phase I: June 2017
Faculty Survey	2. What are the obstacles to learning as noted by faculty who teach native-Arabic, female English language learners?	Phase I: May 2017
Faculty Focus Group	3. What are the obstacles to learning as noted by faculty who teach native-Arabic, female English language learners?	Phase I: June 2017

Data Analysis

Data collected for this study was qualitative or textual data (Creswell, 2014). Analyzing the data followed five broad steps, as outlined by Yin (2016), to include organizing the data, disassembling the data, reassembling the data, generating interpretations, and drawing conclusions. Interpretations or reflecting on what was learned as well as concluding thoughts will be presented in Chapter 4 (Creswell, 2014).

The following discussion will focus on the first three steps of organizing, disassembling, and reassembling (Yin, 2016). General steps will be presented first, followed by the specific steps used to answer the Phase I research questions.

Data organization. Yin (2016) points out that formal analysis starts with compiling and sorting data. As the case of this study, qualitative analysis often includes simultaneous data collection and analysis. In other words, they are not separate stages but rather interrelated (Creswell & Poth, 2017). Preliminary data analysis can point to gaps that lead to further analysis, or as data is transcribed and organized, more data is being collected (Creswell & Poth, 2017). Preliminary data analysis began immediately following the transcription of the data (Creswell, 2014). Essentially, at this stage I tried to understand the data in a holistic way (Creswell & Poth, 2017).

Data was organized according to source, date, and eventually conceptual categories. Data in Phase I was organized in a database file using Microsoft Word.

Disassembling the data. Yin (2016) describes disassembling as “breaking down the data into smaller fragments or pieces” (p. 184) and assigning codes to the data fragments. Creswell (2014) describes this process as taking steps from specific to broad. Yet qualitative research also uses a combination of both inductive and deductive approaches. Patton (2015) explains that inductive analysis involves identifying pattern or themes that emerge from data, while deductive analysis use existing frameworks to analyze the data. During Phase I of this study, data was initially coded using in vivo coding. Each line and sentence was coded using phrases or words from the participants’ own words (Miles et al., 2014). During In Vivo coding, inductive analysis is used to identify themes that emerge from the data.

Analytical memoing is the process of writing the researcher’s thoughts about the data to include possible themes, patterns, reflections, and/or meanings (Creswell, 2014; Saldana, 2016; Yin, 2016). Analytical memoing began during the first round of coding

and was extended throughout multiple rounds of coding in both phases of this study.

Memoing helped me to identify preliminary themes, synthesize the data, and connect data into meaningful clusters (Creswell & Poth, 2017; Miles et al., 2014).

Reassembling the data. Reassembling the data includes the process of thematic analysis. This process comprises additional rounds of coding and categorizing codes with the goal of aggregating codes to “form a common idea” (Creswell & Poth, 2017, p. 194). As Saldana (2016) emphasizes, multiple cycles of coding are needed to “develop a sense of categorical, thematic, conceptual, and/or theoretical organization from your array of first cycle codes” (p. 234). During second and third rounds of coding, connections between codes are identified and codes are grouped or categorized together based on these connections (Saldana, 2016). Yet it is during this process that Yin (2016) warns of discretionary bias or the tendency to categorize and look for themes based on your assumptions as opposed to a more objective analysis of the data. A safeguard I used to minimize the risk of discretionary bias was constant comparison. Yin (2016) describes constant comparison as the process of observing for similarities and dissimilarities, constantly comparing the data and reflecting on data decisions. I compared the same codes with different codes, words, codebook definitions, descriptions of behaviors, or events looking for new or different relationships or patterns (Yin, 2016).

Coherency in the coding can be strengthened by using a codebook or definitions for each code (Creswell, 2014). Creswell & Poth (2017) state that establishing boundaries for codes through the descriptions and definitions of the codes can strengthen reliability. Codebooks usually contain the name of the code, a description and boundary of the code, i.e., what is included or what is not, and an example (Creswell & Poth, 2017). Use of a

codebook protects against code drift or data that is coded in a way that does not sufficiently connect to a code and subsequent category (Miles et al., 2014). Codebooks and constant comparison helps to minimize this risk. (See Appendix I for the codebook).

While *saturation* refers to a point in data collection where collecting more data will only lead to the same findings, Yin (2016) uses *theoretical sufficiency* to describe the point when enough data has been collected. As Yin elaborates, “Categories are well described by and fitting with our data” (Yin, 2016, p. 229).

Data analysis for research questions 1 and 2. Data for the faculty survey, faculty focus group, and student interviews were transcribed, organized in Microsoft Word, coded, recoded, and categorized to identify emergent themes. Coding for each of these data sets included multiple rounds of coding. First cycle coding used in vivo coding, or verbatim coding that uses a word or short phrase to describe the code from the language of the participant (Miles et al., 2014; Saldana, 2016). This helped me to capture the voice of the participants, attune myself to their perspectives, and provide in-depth clarity on the cultural context, thus further grounding this study in its sociocultural theoretical foundation and ethnographic approach to analysis (Saldana, 2016). To further the ethnographic approach to analysis, I used a detailed description of the setting well as an arrival scene to situate the research within the cultural context of a UAE college and classroom (Creswell & Poth, 2017; Murchison, 2010). Additionally, each line and sentence was coded and numbered, which according to Saldana (2016), “promotes a more trustworthy analysis” (p. 24). Finally, first and second rounds of coding were coded manually to ensure sufficient reflection on the data (Saldana, 2016).

Miles et al. (2014) explains that patterned coding is used for later coding to group or condense codes into a smaller number of categories. Patterned coding was completed using constant comparison or going back and forth between the data to consider different relationships among the data. During this process, some data was recoded as more effective words or phrases were identified (Saldana, 2016). This process of systematically looking for patterns in the data is one of the most common ways of analyzing data when using an ethnographic approach to qualitative research (Creswell & Poth, 2017).

Themes were identified based on the number of responses. For example, evidentiary support was given to focus group or student interview statements in which three or more persons raised the issues and/or there was a consensus (Saldana, 2016). Additionally, ten sets of coded data were needed to support the creation of a category and subsequent theme. Five sets of coded data were needed to create subthemes within categories. Subcoding is a coding technique often used with qualitative studies using an ethnographic approach (Miles et al., 2014). Subcoding was used extensively to enrich the description of the categories and provide detail when the category was broad (Miles et al., 2014). Finally, comparisons were made between student and faculty data-coded themes using structural coding (see Chapter 4, Figure 4.1). Structural coding is used to compare data segments, show relationships and/or highlight differences (Saldana, 2016). It assigns a content-based phrase to part of the data that links to research question constructs. A network display was used to show the relationships between students and faculty, while a table was used to show side-by-side suggestions of faculty and students (Burnard, Gill, Steward, Treasure, & Chadwick, 2008; Miles et al., 2014). Finally, a narrative description that wove together codes in a final narrative was also used (Miles et al., 2014).

Phase II Research Design and Methods

The second phase of this research included studying the influence of a flipped classroom on student engagement and comprehension, and addressed the two subquestions of this study. A Phase II overview is shown below.

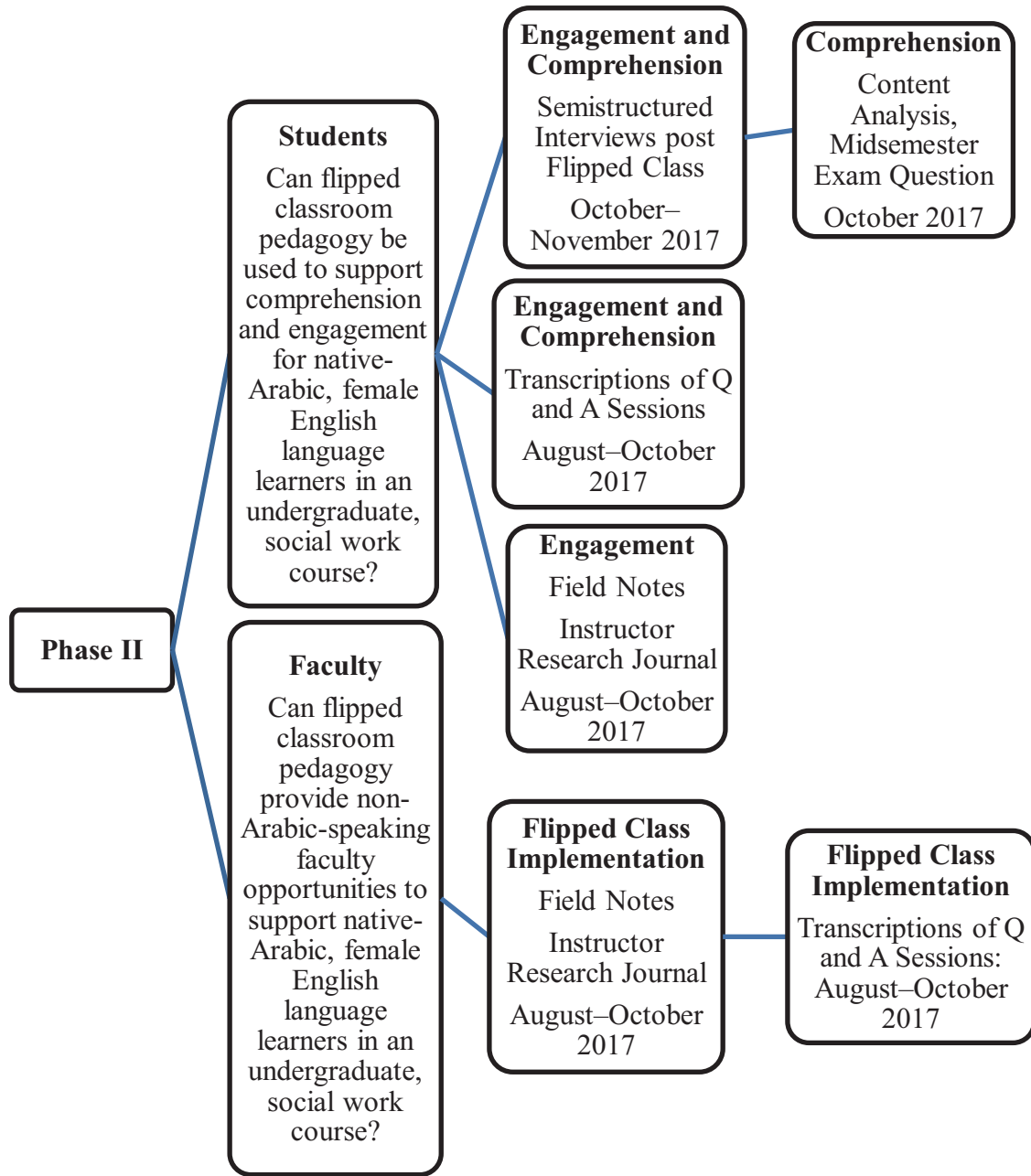


Figure 3.2 Phase II Overview

Phase II again used qualitative methods with an ethnographic approach. Qualitative data was collected through field notes taken during SCL activities, transcriptions of weekly question-and-answer sessions, a research journal used throughout the study, a content analysis of one midsemester exam question, and end-of-the-semester interviews with students. A translator was again present during the post student interviews to ensure students fully understood the questions and their responses were interpreted accurately.

Participants and Sampling

As in Phase I, the sample for this study was a purposive sample, or non-probability sampling in which random selection is not possible, and the sample was selected for a specific purpose (Trochim, 2006). As Creswell (2014) points out, researchers using qualitative methods purposefully select samples “that will best help the researcher understand the problem and the research question” (p. 189).

Students: flipped class. This portion of the study investigated student engagement and comprehension in a flipped class. Participants were all students in the same section of a family social work course, a total of fourteen students who registered for the class. As field notes and transcriptions of class activities would be collected during the semester, all registered students for the course would need to be part of the sample. All participants were Emirati National women with an age range of 19–31. All participants had passed the English qualifying exam. The college research committee currently does not require student and guardian permission for use and reporting of classroom data. Thus, permission forms were not used for this portion of the study. All participant names and identities were kept confidential.

Students: post-flipped-class interviews. The same student volunteers who participated in Phase I interviews were asked to participate in a post-flipped-class interview. Written permission was again obtained, and a translator was again present during the interviews.

Translator: A translator was again present during student interviews. The same translator who assisted with the Phase I interviews assisted with the post-flipped-class interviews. Zoom conferencing was again used as the translator is located at a different campus.

Researcher: I was also a participant in the study and documented my own observations and reflections through the use of a research reflection journal. As Burns, Harvey, and Aragon (2012) explain, “action research places all those engaged inside the research” (p. 3).

Content and Materials

Content. The course selected for the study was a Social Work with Families course. The primary aim of the course is to gain an understanding of family systems concepts as well as the application of various intervention models with families experiencing problems. This is a core social work course that includes topics of social work assessment, goal and intervention planning, and intervention application with families. Skill development is part of the course learning outcomes. This course was chosen as a flipped class because it could provide students with more SCL activities and more opportunities to increase skill development.

Materials. Twenty-three videos were created to cover the four learning outcomes of the course. I followed suggestions of Overmyer (2014) and used Camtasia screen

capture software, a webcam, and a USB microphone to create online lecture videos. The videos were chunked or whittled down to their basic points or concepts, ridding them of extraneous information (Arnold-Garza, 2014). Key Arabic words were also embedded in the videos. The suggestion for embedding key Arabic words was overwhelmingly given by students during the Phase I interviews. As one student emphasized, this would help them not only understand the concepts but also know which Arabic words to use in practice settings. As expressed by one student, Cala, “I have to translate and find the right words for social work practice. Confidentiality, for example, I do not know the right Arabic word.”

Videos were provided in the learning management system, Blackboard Learn, where all students enrolled in the course could access them. Closed-captioning was also provided through YouTube, which students could access via the settings tab while watching the videos. Formative quizzes provided at the end of each learning module helped me and the students to highlight areas they did not understand. Students accessed the quizzes via Blackboard Learn.

SCL techniques included small-group work, large group work, culturally relevant case samples, role-play activities, assessment projects, and problem-based learning to address client problems and research appropriate interventions. Role plays, case samples, and other activities were based on UAE issues and cases to increase cultural relevancy and links to UAE social work practice (see Appendix K for sample activities and activities calendar).

The electronic text used in the class was *An Introduction to Family Social Work, International Edition*.

Research Methods to Answer Subquestions a and b

Phase II was implemented during the fall semester of 2017 and included the contextualization, implementation, and study of a flipped classroom. Materials were created the summer before. Following a first-week orientation to a flipped class and SCL, students began to view lectures or other electronic material outside of class via Blackboard Learn. During class time, students participated in a variety of collaborative and active-learning activities.

To address possible issues of weak comprehension, time constraints, and internet access issues, a question-and-answer session to take place at the beginning of class was built into the course design. During these sessions, I could address questions related to the video lectures. Engin and Donanci (2014) provide support for a question-and-answer session and emphasize that UAE students needed the additional review or revision of a question-and-answer session at the beginning of a flipped class. Additionally, this time could be used by students who were not able to watch the videos prior to coming to class. As Gallant and Pounder (2008) emphasize, “family pressures, emphasized by both religious and cultural traditions” (p. 29), could potentially interfere with completion of watching the videos and completing quizzes outside of class. Additionally, students that did not have internet connectivity at their homes could watch the online videos ahead of time in one of the college computer labs.

Class activities focused on SCL activities that included contextually relevant case samples, extensive use of role play, and collaborative-learning activities. Classes were organized around a common schedule of a beginning question-and-answer segment, small-group work, large-group work or role play activities, discussion and summary, time

to catch up on watching videos or taking quizzes (see Appendix K for sample plan). As this class was a Social Work with Families course, family social work skills were introduced and practiced throughout the semester through case samples, problem-based learning, and role-play exercises in which students demonstrated and practiced skills.

Qualitative data was collected during class activities through the audio transcriptions of question-and-answer sessions and field notes taken during student activities. An instructor research journal was kept throughout the planning and acting phase of this action research project. Through implementing systemic approaches to journaling, such as using specific questions to guide reflection and setting specific times during the week to complete reflections, I was less likely to impose my own meanings or assumptions on the research process (Kincheloe, 1995; Lamb, 2013). At midsemester, one exam's question responses were analyzed to gauge student comprehension.

Towards the end of the semester, post-flipped-class interviews were scheduled. Four out of five of the students who participated in the initial interviews participated in the post interviews. The fifth student withdrew from the class due to scheduling conflicts, and another member of the class was interviewed in her place. Post student interviews were conducted in weeks 11 and 12, towards the end of the semester, and followed a similar process as the first set of student interviews. I asked all students the same question, followed by an oral translation of the question by the translator. Follow-up questions depended upon the student response.

Data Collection Tools.

Data collection tools included field notes, weekly audio transcriptions of the question-and-answer portion of the flipped class, instructor's research journal, content analysis of a midsemester exam question, and post student interviews.

Transcription of question-and-answer sessions. Transcriptions of question-and-answer sessions were used to address research subquestions a and b. These questions included how a flipped class could be used to support student engagement and comprehension as well as how non-Arabic-speaking faculty could use a flipped class to support learning. Transcription data of the question-and-answer sessions was deemed important, as the sessions served as a link between the online learning and class activities. This data also helped me to explore student engagement in the class. Question-and-answer sessions occurred at the beginning of each class session. These sessions were captured through the use of an audio file and were transcribed weekly, within 48 of the class.

Field notes. Field notes were used to address the research subquestions a and b. Patton (2015) explains the importance of field notes as a way to provide detailed descriptions of the behaviors, interactions, and activities within a specific context. Mertler (2014) adds that field notes help the educator to “see some things that students might not be able to report on themselves” (p. 127). Field notes for this study were used to gauge student engagement. Especially during class activities, field notes provided a data collection method to document observations related to student interactions and engagement during small- and large-group work. Field notes included my observations

and interpretation of those observations (Mertler, 2014). These were typed after each class session (see Appendix E Field Notes Form).

Research journal. A research journal was kept during the research process and was used to address research subquestions a and b. This journal was used to record observations not recorded elsewhere and provided a systematic way to record my thoughts, impressions, feelings, and analysis (Lamb, 2013). Use of the journal began during the planning stage of this study and extended until the end of the flipped class. Journaling took place at specific times during the week to formalize the process. To ensure dependability, the research journal included structured questions and questions that gauged contextual changes that could occur throughout the process (Mertler, 2014). Lin and Schwartz (2003) discuss the importance of reflection in cross-cultural situations. They provide recommendations for reflections that include being specific in regard to what is being reflected upon. Thus, the journal was structured in the following way, including these initial questions:

1. What is working?
2. What is not working?
3. What are important points I learned from this or today's experiences?
4. What evidence do I have to justify comments made in answering questions 1–3? (Lamb, 2013)

Once the acting stage of implementation and data collection began, questions were added that addressed cross-cultural differences. For example, “What cultural barriers if any do I observe? What cultural strengths or opportunities do I observe? How

can I use this knowledge for future implementations or cycles of flipped classroom?” (see Appendix F).

Content analysis. Content analysis of a midsemester exam question was used to answer research subquestion a, specifically considering student comprehension. As suggested by Gocer (2014), analyzing words and sentences in written text or content analysis can provide clarity regarding the level of comprehension of the student. Written exam question responses can provide an effective means for analyzing comprehension (Gocer, 2014). For this research study, I selected one midsemester exam question that asked students to use higher order thinking and critical thinking skills in their responses. This question specifically asked students to use examination and application skills. Mathis (2015), for example, emphasizes the importance of a social work student’s ability to apply skills to practice situations. Thus this question asked students to both examine assessment tools and apply them to a case sample. Responses from all students were analyzed and compared to all student responses from the previous semester. A rubric based on revised Bloom’s taxonomy guided the analysis (see Chapter 4 for rubric). Manifest and latent content were explored through rubric categories of examination that evaluated manifest content, or what the text said, and application to a case sample to evaluate latent content (Graneheim & Lundman, 2004).

Post Student Interviews. Post student interviews were used to address research subquestions a and b. Students were interviewed towards the end of the semester to understand their perceptions and experiences learning in a flipped class, and how well they believed they learned. This data was used to provide support for the level of student comprehension and engagement. Semistructured open-ended questions were again used

during the interviews to provide participants opportunities to answer freely and describe their experiences (Findlay-Thompson & Mombourquette, 2015). To minimize misinterpretation, a translator was again present and member checking was implemented (see Appendix A for post student interview questions).

Timeline for Data Collection Methods

The table below provides an overview of each data collection tool, research question being addressed, and timeline for Phase II.

Table 3.2 Timeline for Phase II Data Collection

Data Collection Tool	Research Question Addressed	Timeline
Transcriptions of Question-and-Answer Sessions	<p>a. How can a flipped classroom pedagogy be used to support comprehension and engagement for native-Arabic, female English language learners in an undergraduate, social work course?</p> <p>b. How can a flipped classroom pedagogy provide faculty who are non-Arabic speakers opportunities to support native-Arabic, female English language learners in an undergraduate, social work course?</p>	Phase II: Weekly for August, September, October 2017
Field Notes	<p>a. How can a flipped classroom pedagogy be used to support comprehension and engagement for native-Arabic, female English language learners in an undergraduate, social work course?</p> <p>b. How can a flipped classroom pedagogy provide non-Arabic faculty opportunities to support native-Arabic, female English language learners in an</p>	Phase II: Every class session in which students are engaged in active learning techniques. (Class sessions in which tests are administered were not part of the field notes.)

	undergraduate, social work course?	
Research Journal	<p>a. How can a flipped classroom pedagogy be used to support engagement and comprehension for native-Arabic, female English language learners in an undergraduate, social work course?</p> <p>b. How can a flipped classroom pedagogy provide non-Arabic faculty opportunities to support native-Arabic, female English language learners in an undergraduate, social work course?</p>	Phase II: August 14–November 8, 2017.
Content Analysis of a Midsemester Exam Question	<p>a. How can a flipped classroom pedagogy be used to support comprehension and engagement for native-Arabic, female English language learners in an undergraduate, social work course?</p>	Phase II: October 2017
Post Flipped Class Student Interviews	<p>a. How can a flipped classroom pedagogy be used to support engagement and comprehension for native-Arabic, female English language learners in an undergraduate, social work course?</p> <p>b. How can a flipped classroom pedagogy provide non-Arabic faculty opportunities to support native Arabic, female English language learners in an undergraduate, social work course?</p>	Phase II: November 2017

Data Analysis for Research Questions a and b

The following discussion will again focus on the first three steps of organizing, disassembling, and reassembling the data (Yin, 2016). General steps will be presented first, followed by the specific steps used to answer the Phase II research subquestions.

Organizing the data. Phase II used NVivo11 Software, or computer-assisted qualitative data analysis (Yin, 2016). NVivo11 was used in Phase II due to the amount of data generated during this phase and the benefit of the organizational capacity in using the software.

Data from field notes, audio transcriptions of the question-and-answer sessions, research journal, and post student interviews were transcribed, organized in NVivo 11, as well as coded, recoded, and categorized according to a priori codes and to identify some emergent themes.

Disassembling the data. Disassembling data includes assigning codes to the data fragments (Yin, 2016). In Phase II, a priori codes, or predetermined codes based on the constructs of the research questions, were used. A priori codes were used because codes based or aligned with the constructs of the research questions helped me to answer the questions of how a flipped class could support comprehension and engagement among second-language learners (Saldana, 2016). Some emergent codes were also identified. Analytical memoing again helped me reflect on the data and extended throughout multiple rounds of coding (Creswell, 2014; Miles et al., 2014; Saldana, 2016; Yin, 2016).

Reassembling the data. Multiple rounds of coding were again used to establish a priori categories and identify some emergent themes (Miles et al., 2014). Constant comparison was also used to minimize the risk of discretionary bias (Yin, 2016). As in Phase I, I compared the same codes with different codes, words, descriptions of behaviors, or events, looking for new or different relationships or patterns (Yin, 2016). I continued to use a codebook that delineated the definition, clarified the boundary of the

code, and provided an example (Creswell, 2014; Creswell & Poth, 2017; Miles et al., 2014). (See Appendix I for Phase I and Phase II codebooks).

Theoretical sufficiency, or the point when enough data has been collected and categories are well described, was reached towards the end of the semester (Yin, 2016).

Research subquestion a. The use of a priori codes that reflected the constructs of research subquestion a, engagement and comprehension, were deemed important and were used to understand the possible influence of the flipped class on the guiding constructs of this study. For example, sources of data that were analyzed to understand comprehension included the content analysis of a midsemester exam question and the post student interviews while sources of data analyzed to understand engagement included field notes, the audio transcriptions of the question-and-answer sessions, the research journal and post student interviews.

Data that directly related to class engagement and in-class activities were coded together and were comprised of field notes, the audio transcriptions of the question-and-answer sessions and the research journal. For these sources of data, holistic coding was initially implemented. As explained by Saldana (2016), holistic coding applies a code to a larger unit of data, instead of line by line, to capture the overall point of the text. Holistic coding was used as the research journal was organized according to eight questions that explored aspects of what worked and what did not. Additionally, field notes and transcripts highlighted class activities, which were best coded in segments as opposed to line by line.

To study engagement, I used a priori codes of behavioral, affective, and cognitive engagement. Descriptive coding was employed for subcategories that emerged during the

coding of the data. Descriptive coding is coding that uses a word or phrase to summarize the data (Miles et al., 2014). Subthemes for behavioral engagement included participation in class, interaction with instructor and/or peers, and preparation and organization. Affective engagement subthemes included feelings generated in response to course or course-related material or feelings generated in response to issues outside of the class. The second coding cycle used patterned coding to condense emergent subcategories. As in Phase I, constant comparison, or going back and forth between the data to consider different relationships among the data, was implemented (Saldana, 2016). Additionally, five recorded responses were needed to identify a subtheme. A description that wove together codes in a final narrative was used to display the data (Miles et al., 2014).

The post student interviews were coded separately but again used a priori codes of behavioral, affective and cognitive engagement, comprehension, and future improvements. Emergent subthemes for comprehension included out-of-class activities and class activities. Descriptive coding was again implemented for subcategories that emerged during the coding of the data. Constant comparison helped me to consider different relationships among the data (Saldana, 2016). Five recorded responses were again needed to identify a subtheme. A narrative description that wove together codes in a final narrative was also used to display the data (Miles et al., 2014).

The content analysis of a midsemester question was used to analyze comprehension. This was accomplished by selecting a midsemester exam question that required students to use critical thinking skills. Responses were coded using a rubric that included categories for examination and application, and criteria for depth of comprehension of the responses to include in-depth comprehension, moderate

comprehension, partial comprehension, and no comprehension/did not understand the question (Green & Johnson, 2010).

Research subquestion b. Audio recordings of the question-and-answer sessions, field notes, and the research journal were used to answer research subquestion b. Holistic coding, or coding which applies a code to a larger unit of data instead of line by line, was again used in the first cycle of coding (Saldana, 2016). Emergent codes of flipped class implementation success and flipped class implementation challenges were identified through the use of descriptive coding (Saldana, 2016). The second coding cycle used patterned coding to condense the categories. Constant comparison, or going back and forth between the data to consider different relationships, was again implemented (Saldana, 2016). A narrative description that wove codes together in a final narrative using the field notes, journal, and audio transcriptions was used to present the data (Miles et al., 2014).

Trustworthiness and Credibility

Credibility of a study is ensuring that a researcher has properly collected and interpreted data so that “findings accurately reflect and represent the world that was studied” (Yin, 2016, p. 83). Yet the challenge with qualitative research is that the researcher seeks to demonstrate understanding rather than a cause-and-effect relationship (Creswell & Poth, 2017; Yin, 2016). Indeed, Yin argues that the researcher should strive for trustworthiness in qualitative research by documenting an *understanding* of the data as opposed to attempting to prove the inherent truthfulness of the data. Trustworthiness can be strengthened through a systematic data collection such as the use of data collection protocols like structured questions for journaling and forms for field note collection,

prolonged engagement in the field of study, and a rich description of the research setting, cultural context, participants, and the research process (Creswell & Poth, 2017; Yin, 2016). These strategies for trustworthiness are viewed by Creswell and Poth (2017) as part of the overall validation strategies of a study.

The following discussion will include specific validity/credibility and dependability/reliability strategies used in this study.

Validity or Credibility Strategies

Validity includes providing safeguards to ensure the accuracy of research findings. Yin (2016) emphasizes that credibility sought in qualitative research is the use of safeguards to ensure the data is properly collected and interpreted. At least two safeguard strategies should be used in qualitative research (Creswell & Poth, 2017). The following strategies were used in this study:

Triangulation. Themes for this study were developed using data from different sources (Creswell, 2014; Mertler, 2014). In turn, different data sources were used to corroborate various themes. Examples include the use of the field notes, audio transcripts, and research journal to corroborate Phase II themes of behavioral, affective, and cognitive engagement as well as a faculty survey and focus group to corroborate Phase I themes of faculty perspective of obstacles to learning. Additionally, study findings were compared to theories to “shed light on a theme or perspective” (Creswell & Poth, 2017, p. 260). Finally, as this study used an ethnographic approach, triangulated data was used to look for patterns regarding thoughts and behaviors related to culture and the influence of culture when using a flipped class approach (Creswell & Poth, 2017).

Member checking. Member checking involves soliciting participant feedback on “the credibility of the findings and interpretations” (Creswell & Poth, 2017, p. 261). Participants are asked to reflect on the accuracy of the analysis and themes. Member checking was completed in two stages due to this two-phase study. Member checking was completed in August 2017 following Phase I, which was conducted in June 2017. I met with four of five of the students in a group. Member checking with faculty was completed in three sessions, and I met with them in pairs or threes. I also met with the translator individually. Member checking for Phase II and end-of-study results were completed in January 2018. The groups were conducted similar to the August member-checking sessions with the exception of the translator who was present in January but not in August.

Prolonged engagement and persistent field observation. Prolonged fieldwork to generate rich and detailed descriptions are important to qualitative research and research with an ethnographic focus (Creswell & Poth, 2017). This includes building rapport with participants, learning about the culture, checking for misinformation, and having extended contact with persons being studied. Through biweekly contact with students over a three-and-a-half-month time period, I was able to extend rapport with students, ask and learn about the cultural influences on their learning experiences, and check for misinformation (Creswell & Poth, 2017). Additionally, the use of a formal field note form or protocol helped to ensure consistent observations (see Appendix E).

Clarifying bias. Clarifying bias includes the thoroughness in which a researcher discloses his or her biases, orientation, values, and experiences (Creswell & Poth, 2017). In this study, I disclosed my position but also engaged in the process of ongoing self-

reflection through the use of a research journal, which included guiding questions that helped me to stay focused on my own perspectives within the cultural context. For example, journal questions included my observations of cultural strengths and how these could be maximized (Creswell, 2014; Creswell & Poth, 2017; Lin & Schwartz, 2003; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009).

Peer debriefing. Peer debriefing involves asking someone who is familiar with the research to review it (Creswell & Poth, 2017). A number of peers reviewed the work of this study. First, the chair of the Applied Research Committee was provided a copy of the dissertation draft. The translator, who is also a member of the social work faculty and familiar with the research, reviewed it. Additionally, a faculty member outside the social work department but who was familiar with the research reviewed it, and a health sciences faculty reviewed the findings (Creswell, 2014).

Generating a rich, thick description. Providing a detailed description of the participants and settings allows readers to decide if they can transfer study findings to their own settings (Creswell & Poth, 2017; Yin, 2016). In this study, description was provided through direct quotations of participants, establishing an arrival scene to situate the study within the world of the second-language learner, and attempts to contextualize descriptions such as the influence of timing issues during Ramadan on data collection decisions.

Memoing. Creswell and Poth (2017) point out that memoing creates a digital audit trail “that documents thinking processes and clarifies understandings over time” (p. 188). In this study, memoing began during the first round of coding and extended to other rounds of coding in this study.

Reporting of translator issues. Inappropriate or inconsistent use of a translator can threaten a study's validity (Squires, 2009). Ways that potential translator problems were addressed in this study included the following. The translator translated my questions each time after I asked a question, whether interpretation was requested or not. Additionally, the translator was asked to translate the question as closely as possible to what was asked. Squires (2009) emphasizes that "the process of translation alters the original use and sometimes the structure of the participants' use of language" (p. 5). Yet the translator did make this known during the translation process and consistently asked for clarification from both participants and me. For example, she would clarify a question with me and then ask the student. In turn, she would clarify the student's response, then translate it. Squires (2009) supports this and states that oral translation has fewer challenges than written translation.

Dependability

Dependability and reliability refers to the consistency and stability of the researcher's approach (Creswell & Poth, 2017). This discussion will include the use of a common platform for coding, development of a codebook and consistent coding scheme, application of coding across transcripts, and the use of an additional coder to check the consistency of codes (Creswell, 2014; Creswell & Poth, 2017).

Establishing a coding platform. The common platform of Microsoft Word was used for Phase I, and NVivo11 computer-assisted program was used for Phase II (Creswell & Poth, 2017).

Codebook development. A codebook was created that defined and described codes after the generation of emergent codes, or at the beginning of the coding process

when a priori codes were used. This codebook was revised during later cycles of coding (Creswell & Poth, 2017) (see Appendix I).

Application of the codebook. I applied and reapplied the codebook to additional transcripts and compared coding to see if the coding was consistent (Creswell & Poth, 2017).

Cross-checking of codes. To ensure the stability of coding and coding responses, a social work faculty member worked with me to establish agreement on the data themes (Creswell & Poth, 2017). Specifically, using the codebook she reviewed the coding and themes. While Patton (2015) warns that an external researcher who is not familiar with the study may lack the knowledge and insight of the researcher, and this could lead to superficial coding decisions, the external researcher used for this study was also the translator who was present for the student interviews and assisted with preparing the materials for the flipped class. The intercoder agreement, or degree of agreement between myself and the external coder, reached 90% for both Phase I and Phase II.

Multiple rounds of coding. Saldana (2016) describes the importance of multiple rounds of coding to ensure consistency and assessment of the data. All data was coded a minimum of three times, excluding the external faculty member who checked the coding.

Action Plan and Dissemination of Information

Mertler (2014) suggests that an action plan can include plans for future implementation of your improvements or interventions yet could also be a proposal for future cycles of action research. An action plan answers the “what next?” question and guides the researcher into the next phase of the action research cycle (Mertler, 2014).

Action research does not have an end point or conclusion but rather begins an iterative

process of planning, acting, developing, and reflecting. Hammond (2013) links this iterative process to the work of Dewey and Dewey's ecological view of the dialectical and transactional nature of the classroom and knowledge generation. Through transactions with the world around us, we come to understand and gain new knowledge, but this knowledge always amends our present reality and leads to gaps and new problems. Thus, action research views knowledge as provisional and the process of action research as "an iterative, never-ending process" (Hammond, 2013, p. 609). In this study, what was learned can be applied to future cycles of a flipped classroom implementation, just as what was learned in the Phase I interviews and focus group were added into the Phase II implementation of a flipped class. These future cycles start with an action plan.

The development of my action plan began by first reflecting on my research process and on my results. Through this reflection, I concluded that the findings of this study supported the implementation of future cycles of a flipped class. This led to the development of a proposal or action plan that included specific steps for the implementation of a future flipped class and ways to build on strengths and address weaknesses, both discovered through the acting phase of this research. As recommended by Mok (2014), trials for future flipped classrooms should be considered for appropriate courses.

Dissemination of the research included sharing results with the social work and health sciences faculty as well as application to an international social work conference. Abstracts have been submitted for acceptance at a future scholarly conference.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations abound in qualitative research and should be reflected on throughout each phase of the research process (Creswell & Poth, 2017). Initially, research needs approval from institutional review boards, organization research committees, and local permissions (Creswell & Poth, 2017). For my study, these approvals included the IRB, the USC Curriculum and Instruction Program, my institution's Applied Research Committee, and the permission of my division chair. The approval processes included considering the goals of the study, a study timeline, place, students and faculty involved as well as assurances of confidentiality and protection of participants. (See Appendices L, M, and N for IRB and college approval letters).

Permission forms were obtained ahead of time from participants of this research. Forms for students contained an assurance statement that "there is no penalty for refusing to participate" (Nolan and Putten, 2007) as well as assurances of confidentiality and anonymity. Students were also informed that the interviews would be audiotaped. I met with each student personally, in advance of the interviews, and discussed the objectives of the research, provided them with the permission forms to share with their guardians (see Appendix D for copy of student permission forms), and reviewed verification of the college approval for the research. An email was sent to participants of the faculty focus group that contained the faculty permission forms, an explanation of the research, and verification of the approval of the research. I reviewed procedures for confidentiality and anonymity of participants at the beginning of the focus group and student interviews. In this final report, pseudonyms were used for all student and faculty participants to protect

confidentiality. Additionally, identifying information was also changed or limited to further protect the confidentiality of the participants.

Data collection safeguards included the storage of information. Information was stored on my computer which is secure and password protected. Additionally, in this final report writing, confidentiality is protected through the use of pseudonyms and limiting of identifying information.

Summary

This chapter provided the methodology used to study research questions of obstacles to learning among native-Arabic speakers learning in an English-speaking environment as well as understanding how a flipped class could be used to support their learning. An ethnographic, qualitative methodology, within an action research framework, was used to study the research questions.

Chapter 4 will present findings of this two-phase study in a cross-participant manner. As Yin (2016) explains, the voices of the participants are preserved but the participants are not presented with any depth, as the focus is on the topic and not on the individual participants.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study is to understand the obstacles encountered in a second-language UAE bachelor's program classroom and how a flipped classroom approach could be contextualized and used to support teaching and learning. Presentation of findings will begin with a description of the student participants' own words regarding learning in a second-language environment, followed by a Phase I description of the participants and setting, detailed presentation and analysis of emergent themes from students' and instructor's own words, and a discussion of these findings. Presentation of findings for Phase II begins with a description of the implementation of the flipped classroom, followed by a detailed presentation of themes, content analysis of a test question, and final student responses in their own words, followed again by a discussion of these findings. The chapter concludes with a summary and integration of the primary findings from Phase I and Phase II.

This two-phase approach allowed for data from the first phase of the study to inform implementation of the second phase or how a flipped classroom could support learning in a second-language classroom environment. This follows the iterative action-reflection cycle of action research as described by McNiff and Whitehead (2011) to include observing, reflecting, acting, evaluating, and modifying.

Research questions to be addressed in Phase I include the following: What are the obstacles to learning identified by native-Arabic, female English language learners? What

are the obstacles to learning as noted by faculty who teach native-Arabic, female English language learners? To answer these research questions, an ethnographic qualitative approach was used to understand participant perspectives on obstacles experienced within the specific cultural context of a second-language UAE college learning environment (Creswell & Poth, 2017; Patton, 2015). This approach included the collection of qualitative data to provide a rich description of the participants and setting and used an inductive approach to explore relationships that emerged from the data (Patton, 2015).

Following the presentation of Phase I, this chapter presents findings from Phase II. Research questions answered in Phase II were subquestions of Phase I and included the following: How can a flipped classroom pedagogy be used to support comprehension and engagement for native-Arabic, female English language learners in an undergraduate social work course? How can a flipped classroom pedagogy provide non-Arabic-speaking faculty opportunities to support native-Arabic, female English language learners in an undergraduate social work course? An ethnographic qualitative approach was again used; however, data collected in this phase was analyzed using a combination of priori codes and emergent codes. As noted in Chapter 3, pseudonyms are used for student and faculty participants to protect anonymity.

The World of a Second-Language Learner

So what is it like learning in another language? I asked this at the end of class, early one November afternoon. I was sitting with a group of seven students in an upstairs classroom. Amna immediately replied, “Miss, for me difficult. Very, very difficult. But now I say to myself, she has a lot of knowledge. Why not benefit from the teacher. Maybe Arabic I understand, but this is I useful for me also. So now Alhamdulillah, I

accept to teach like this.” Nasra shared that she had gone to private primary and secondary schools where students learned in mostly English. English, she said, was easy. Amna laughed a bit: “Miss, I want to talk about this point. Some students here in college from private school and some public school. For me I am from public school. Public school in all subjects . . . Arabic. For me I start English from grade four and my English teacher not from English country- she Arabic. She teach us grammar.” Maha agreed with Amna. “Always in the beginning problems and difficulties. But with practice we learn English. For me, though, my father and mother are old and not interest with the English so it was hard to practice it.” The conversation drifted towards boring classes. “What makes a class boring?” I asked. Nasra provided an example. “Miss, when I was in grade 10. The miss was talking in English and we don’t understand nothing.” “So what made it boring was you did not understand her?” I asked. “Yes, yes!”

Phase I Findings

Research Question 1

What are the obstacles to learning identified by native-Arabic, female English language learners? This research question was explored through semistructured interviews with five students. Data was collected and recorded with a Sony-IC audio recorder and note taking.

Participant sample. Interviews of five students occurred during the Summer I semester, the semester prior to implementation of the flipped class. While all students in the social work program are Emirati, female students, I used a purposive sample and asked students to participate in the interviews based on a diversity of age and marital and motherhood status to gain their perspectives on the impact of psychosocial factors that

could influence their learning (Creswell, 2014). All students asked agreed to be interviewed. Table 4.1 provides a description summary of the student participants. Each student brought a unique perspective to the interviews. Amna, for example, provided the perspective of a student who had struggled with English language learning but through diligence verbalized deep learning in the social work program, while Cala provided her perspective of learning and managing multiple roles as a mother, wife, and student.

Table 4.1 Student Participant Demographic Data

Student	Age Range	Marital Status	Motherhood Status
Amna	25-35 Mature Returning Student	Not Married	No Children
Bakhita	20-25	Engaged	No Children
Cala	25-35	Married	Children
*Dalal	20-25	Married	No Children
Eiman	25-35 Mature Returning Student, Student with Disabilities	Not Married	No Children
**Fatima	25-35	Married	Children

*Participated in the *Obstacles to Learning Interview* only.

**Participated in the *Post Flipped Class Interview* only.

Setting and timing. As discussed in Chapter 3, student interviews were combined because of time constraints with shorter working hours due to Ramadan. Additionally, all interviews were conducted in one of the classrooms at the college, and the translator joined via Zoom conferencing. The laptop was placed in the center of a work table, and

each student was asked the same initial question, but follow-up questions depended upon the student responses.

Translator. As mentioned in Chapter 3, the translator provided oral translation for students' Arabic responses. Four out of five students responded, at times, in both languages. In other words, they would begin their response in one language but convert to either Arabic or English as they spoke. This appeared to be mostly due to beginning the response in English but switching to Arabic to clarify or modify their responses. One student, Dalal, responded in English only.

Student Interview Findings

Student interview findings were collected with a Sony-IC audio recorder and note taking during two sets of interviews. Themes identified from the student interviews included English Communication Issues, Learning Behaviors, and Instructional Strategies. Themes were identified based on the number of responses of student participants. Categories of codes that were later themed required at least ten recorded responses and/or agreement from the majority of participants. Subthemes required five recorded responses and/or agreement from the majority of participants. Theme categories, sources, and patterns of responses for each theme are summarized in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2 Student Interview Emergent Themes, Sources, and Response Frequency Patterns

Emergent Themes	5 Sources	Response Frequency Patterns
English Communication Issues	5 5 out of 5	29%
Learning Behaviors	5 5 out of 5	22%
Instructional Strategies	5 5 out of 5	49%

Theme 1: English Communication Issues. The first theme that emerged from student interviews was English Communication Issues. Codes categorized and themed as English Communication Issues included statements that highlighted student perceptions of obstacles and difficulties that they experienced while learning in a second-language environment. Two subthemes that emerged included “Understands Something Different” and “Long Time to Translate.” (See Appendix A for interview questions and Appendix I for codebook).

Subtheme 1.1: Understands Something Different. Problems of being misunderstood by instructors and difficulties with translations were consistent with all students interviewed, none of whom went to private schools or schools where teaching is mostly in English. Two students, who described themselves as “weak in English,” were students Amna and Bakhita. Amna was a diligent student who had previously obtained a vocational certificate. She stated that “English grammar was the most difficult part” of her studies. She expressed a desire to both understand and communicate more effectively in English. Bakhita was on academic probation for her low GPA and stated her classes were often “very difficult for her to understand.” The translator translated each question in Arabic after I asked the question. Amna and Bakhita both explained some portions in Arabic as indicated below. I began by asking Amna what was most difficult for her learning in a second language.

Amna: A long time for me to study. [Then she began speaking in Arabic.]

Translator: In terms of trying to understand in her English language-she has improved a lot. In the beginning, she translated word by word and this took a very long time. Now she is better at understanding the

context. What bothers her now is being able to present orally in English. She understands the question well but does not have the English to communicate properly.

Bakhita: [spoke in Arabic]

Translator: Yes, this is also an obstacle for her. She understands the question well, but when she writes, the teacher understands something different than what she meant. This leads to losing marks.

Amna and Bakhita indicated they often understood teaching but did not have an adequate English vocabulary to communicate this understanding. Bakhita added how being misunderstood due to low English proficiency impacted her GPA.

Cala, a married student with children, explained that even though her English was adequate, it impacted her academic performance. Cala responded in Arabic.

Translator: She can answer well in Arabic but in English, her answer is generic because she cannot find the right words. She also said she had problems with academic vocabulary and finding the right discipline specific word.

I followed up by asking Cala about difficulties she encountered in her social work classes or learning social work concepts in English.

Translator: In Arabic it will be much easier. Now she can cope with English and she understands it but still it would be easier in Arabic.

Cala then switched to English and spoke forcefully about problems she could encounter in practicing future community-based social work. She linked these to language difficulties.

Cala: It is difficult when we finish studies, and we will work. Who will we work with? We will work with Arabic people. They will not know what we are talking about. When we translate some of the social work words they do not know-I have to translate and find the right words for practice – Confidentiality- or what we have to do, many things. We will not know the right Arabic words. It will be hard I think. Now, I can do it, but in the future it will be hard.

Cala and Eiman added the importance of embedding key Arabic words in course materials. As the translator expressed regarding their response, “They are both saying they want some Arabic words in the slides and materials.”

Subtheme 1.2: Long time to translate. Students also talked about difficulties with translation from English to Arabic. Translation added another layer of difficulty, and Bakhita stated she translated materials word for word. Bakhita emphasized in Arabic that translation was the hardest component of learning in a second language.

Translator: She is also weak in English, very difficult for her to understand. It takes her a lot of time to study. She uses Google Translate a lot to understand the material but it takes her along time to translate.

Cala added issues with translation and variations in meaning, especially when the words were taken out of context. She responded in English.

Cala: The Google Translate will not give me the correct answer. It will give me a different answer. So I have to add words.

Responses from students Bakhita and Cala highlight obstacles they faced when studying and attempting to translate their study materials. These obstacles included extra

time and issues with literal word-to-word translation and searching for equivalent meanings (Khalifa, 2015).

Theme 2: Learning Behaviors. A second theme that emerged from the student interviews was the learning behaviors of students. Codes categorized and themed as Learning Behaviors included statements by students that highlighted their perceptions of obstacles in communicating with instructors. An added unique subtheme, or subtheme that did not meet the subtheme criteria, was “managing time between personal and academic responsibilities.” This unique subtheme is mentioned here because of its relevance and impact on learning (see Appendix A for interview questions and Appendix I for codebook).

In this portion of the interviews, I asked students what they did when they did not understand the instructor or the course material. Bakhita again responded in Arabic.

Translator: Sometimes she tries to explain to the teacher, but she does not know if the teacher understands.

Yet Amna’s response, again in Arabic, highlighted concerns about interrupting the instructor.

Translator: Sometimes during the class, she opens her slides and Google Translate at the same time. She tries to resolve it herself. She also asks her friends in class.

Researcher: Does this get you in trouble by the teacher when you ask your classmates?

Amna: I do not want to interrupt the teacher so I use Google Translate or ask my classmates.

Dalal, a recently married student who stated she did well academically, responded to the same question in English.

Dalal: I ask my friends what the miss is saying, and translate. I also use Google Translate. Because I think the teacher already explained and I did not get it. So I think whatever she gives me I will not understand.

Eiman, a student with disabilities, responded to the same question in Arabic.

Translator: She makes an effort to translate or at home looks up the answer or seeks examples. She is sometimes shy and does not want to interrupt her teacher.

Finally, Amna described how other students would prevent one another from addressing issues with the teacher. She responded in Arabic.

Translator: Other students may also prevent you from talking to the teacher about changing her style.

Researcher: How do other students prevent you?

Amna: They think it is something not appropriate to do or you are criticizing the teacher. Students tell you this.

Amna also connected obstacles to learning to roles and responsibilities other than the role of a student. When I asked Amna about other obstacles to learning, she addressed psychosocial factors that could impact learning.

Amna: Well, my classmates' pregnancies or illnesses. [She then began speaking in Arabic.]

Translator: Transportation is a problem during the exams, students come from remote areas by bus and it can be difficult to find the extra time to study.

Asking for clarification from the instructor appeared to be perceived as ineffective by some and impolite by others. And as Amna pointed out, when she tried to help the teacher understand that too much lecturing was a problem, other students stopped her. Other obstacles included personal responsibilities and transportation issues.

Theme 3: Instructional Strategies. A third theme that emerged from student interviews was instructional strategies that worked or did not work. Codes categorized and themed as “How I learn best” included statements by students that highlighted their perceptions of what strategies helped them to learn and strategies that were not helpful. This theme was divided into two subthemes that included “Strategies that work” and “Strategies that do not work.” (See Appendix A for interview questions and Appendix I for codebook.)

Subtheme 3.1: Strategies that work. Students consistently talked about their need to connect to the material through case samples and stories from the instructor’s experiences. Cala described these strategies as ways that the material “sticks in our minds.” Other student responses are presented here. When asked about a second-language class in which they learned best, Dalal and Eiman talked about the importance of instructor stories.

Dalal: The teacher gave us a lot of stories and examples for each slide. I feel like when the teacher explains, I imagine in my own life, something happens like this. When she gives us real examples.

Sometimes the teacher brings us a case study from web studies, and these do not help us. We want real stories. Don't bring us long case studies to read.

Eiman: We want teacher to tell us something that happened to you. [Then speaks in Arabic.]

Translator: They said they can relate better to examples from the UAE.

Cala also talked about the importance of cultural relevancy. Examples from the UAE were highlighted as important to their learning.

Cala: Yes, we want to talk about this, examples from you and from here. It is the same-if we hear the examples we can remember on a test. It sticks in our minds. But if you read it-no. You will not understand the sensitive part of the story. It is not the real life.

The need for feedback from the teacher was also highlighted. Amna emphasized that there could never be enough feedback from instructors following assessments: "We need the feedback to understand what we are doing right and wrong." Yet Bakhita added that feedback during class activities was also important. As spoken by the translator, "She also liked the feedback from the teacher. This was very important to have together with the activity."

In-class activities were also mentioned by students as helpful. Cala, for example, talked about her perception that in in-class role-play activities, practiced in English, helped her to learn skills: "A lot of role plays. The teachers have to give us feedback. Tell us what we did wrong. Then it is in our mind more. Then we can talk, talk, talk."

Students also asked for more group work. Dalal in particular talked about how group

work combined with teacher questioning helped her to learn: “Group work I like this. Also when the teachers give us questions, and we have to go around to different groups and find the answers.” Eiman supported this and pointed out that group work helped students to learn from each other.

Students overwhelmingly asked for group work, role-play opportunities, and other in-class activities but with the added restriction that activities and instructor examples connect to their culture or the instructor helped them to make the connection. As Dalal stated, students wanted real stories.

Subtheme 3.2: Strategies that do not work. Yet while collaborative learning was viewed as effective, long lectures were identified as problems by several students. In fact, long lectures were emphasized as the most ineffective teaching strategy. Amna succinctly stated that long lectures were “difficult,” but Bakhita went further to talk about the boredom she felt during long lectures. Amna added in Arabic.

Translator: Very quickly they feel very bored and it just comes a point where they just want to leave the class. No activities make it very difficult.

Bakhita: I just become very sleepy.

A sense of boredom and not sufficiently learning when the lecture was the primary instructional tool was emphasized. Yet in her later interview, Cala seemed to suggest it was the instructor’s responsibility to engage students, and she emphasized she liked teachers “who make the class active so we not feel lazy and sleepy.”

Summary

Obstacles to learning in a second-language environment identified by undergraduate social work students included obstacles of English-language communication issues such as misunderstanding between students and faculty and laborious translation issues. These issues are compounded by filtered interactions in which students in this study described hesitancy in questioning instructors as well as alternate roles and responsibilities that could limit the time needed to devote to studying. Finally, instructional strategies identified by students that could mitigate obstacles included instructor examples, case studies and activities that connected to the cultural context. Indeed, students verbalized a desire to connect their learning to their local context and future social work practice. Students also expressed positive feelings about collaborative learning and groupwork. Strategies that were identified as less effective included long lectures or using materials that did not connect to the local culture.

Research Question 2

What are obstacles to learning and teaching as noted by faculty who teach native-Arabic, female English language learners? To address this question data was collected through an open-ended-question survey and faculty focus group.

Participant recruitment. A small purposive sample of faculty were recruited to complete the faculty survey and participate in the faculty focus group. As mentioned, faculty were on the campus only a limited period of time due to Ramadan hours. Recruitment considerations included if faculty taught or might teach social work or health students, and if they were non-Arabic speakers. While all were non-Arabic speakers, one was a second-language English speaker. Additionally, faculty were recruited based on a

diversity of years teaching in a second-language learning environment. While the sample included faculty from both the Northern and Southern Hemispheres, all had been trained at institutions influenced by Western teaching pedagogy and methods. All faculty were expatriates and represented six different countries of origin. Five participants held terminal degrees of PhD while two participants held master's degrees. Eight faculty were asked to participate in an initial survey and a focus group. Four faculty completed the survey and seven faculty participated in the focus group. Table 4.3 provides a description of faculty gender and years of experience teaching in a second-language learning environment.

Table 4.3 Faculty Focus Group Participant Data

Faculty	Gender	1–3 years teaching in a second-language environment	4–7 years teaching in a second-language environment	8+ years teaching in a second-language environment
Instructor A	Female			X
Instructor B	Male	X		
Instructor C	Male	X		
Instructor D	Female		X	
Instructor E	Male			X
Instructor F	Female	X		
Instructor G	Female		X	

Faculty mini survey and focus group question development. A two-open-ended-question mini survey titled *Instructional Challenges and Second-Language Learners* was initially sent to participants. The survey was sent as a link inside an email. The email explained the purpose and a brief description of the research, an explanation of

permissions granted from the college’s Applied Research Committee, and how the survey would be used. Survey Monkey was used to collect responses. Both questions stemmed from the research question, “What are the obstacles to learning as noted by faculty that teach native-Arabic, female English language learners?”

Focus group questions were developed from the identified obstacles and themes that emerged from the survey to further clarify and elaborate on the identified obstacles (Wolff et al., 1993). Table 4.4 provides the survey questions and a summary of identified survey obstacles and themes.

Table 4.4 Faculty Survey Findings

Question	Identified Obstacle/Theme	Response Frequency
1. What are the most common instructional obstacles you encounter when teaching native-Arabic, second-language English learners?	Problems with communication due to weak English	6
	Problems with application	2
	Lack of prior scientific and technical English skills	2
2. What obstacles do you believe students encounter in comprehending your lectures and/or materials?	Discipline-related terminology	2
	Dense or heavy course material	2
	Word-to-word translation	2
	Speed of delivery or speech is too fast	1

From the identified survey themes and obstacles, approximately eight questions were developed that explored experiences of language, cultural, behavioral, and environmental obstacles to teaching in a second-language environment. Perceptions of

student obstacles to learning were also included, such as questions teaching methods and curriculum issues. A final question of strategies that instructors believed were helpful was also added (See Appendix B for Faculty Survey and Response and Appendix C for Faculty Focus Group Questions).

Setting and timing. Upon completion of the survey, an email was sent to the sample of eight faculty. The email included information on timing, place, purpose, and description of the research as well as attachments that included the permission from the college's Applied Research Committee, permission from the Health Science divisional chair and a focus group consent form (See Appendix D for focus group consent form). The group was scheduled for 1:00 p.m. one June afternoon, in a first-floor classroom. The room was set up with chairs in a circle and an audio recorder at a nearby table.

Focus group structure. Seven of eight invited faculty attended the focus group. All arrived within 10 minutes of the start time. I collected consent forms and reviewed the purpose of the research and how the survey responses had been used in the focus group question development. I also reviewed ethical guidelines of voluntary participation and ways that information would be kept confidential and assured anonymity. I explained the purpose of the research and how responses would be used in Phase II of this research study. Finally, I explained that I would ask the question and would seek clarification or responses from everyone, but no one was obligated to answer.

Faculty Focus Group Findings

Data to address faculty perceptions of obstacles was collected with a Sony-IC audio recorder and note taking during a one-and-a-half-hour faculty focus group. Faculty focus group themes included Differing Expectations, Second-Language Teaching Issues,

Prior Learning Issues, and Instructional Strategies. Table 4.5 provides a summary of faculty focus group emergent themes, number of participants who responded in regard to a theme and the frequency response patterns for each theme.

Table 4.5 Faculty Focus Group Emergent Themes, Sources, and Response Frequency Patterns

Emergent Themes	7 Sources	Response Frequency Patterns
Differing Expectations	86% 6 out of 7	45%
Second-Language Teaching Issues	71% 5 out of 7	22%
Prior Learning Issues	71% 5 out of 7	23%
Instructional Strategies	100%	10%

Theme 1: Differing Expectations. “Student learning expectations and behaviors can clash with teaching expectations and instruction.” Codes categorized and themed as differing expectations included statements by instructors that highlighted their perceptions of differences between what students expected and what instructors expected (see Appendix I for the codebook and emergent theme and subtheme definitions). The theme of differing expectations was divided into four subthemes: “You have to be careful how you say things,” “Students have to connect with you before they can connect with the teaching,” “Sense of collective support,” and “You teach, we learn mindset.” Again quotes were used to highlight the words of participants.

Subtheme 1.1: You have to be careful how you say things. I began by asking about cultural obstacles group members experienced teaching in a UAE second-language learning environment.

Several participants raised concerns that words in general have to be filtered and thoughtfully used. Instructor A, for example, highlighted that the words an instructor used “can get so easily misconstrued. You have to be more careful than in another country where you don’t think about it. You worry.” Yet Instructors C and D emphasized how this filtering of language presented challenges to educating and training students and helping students to understand the broader social issues. Challenges to training students was verbalized by Instructor C, who trained students going into health science professions to complete accurate documentation and document culturally controversial terms such as “procreate, family planning, contraception, abortion.” While Instructor D discussed the problems of discussing relevant social problems with students:

We talk about issues and social problems in a broader context . . . An example was I was talking about various family forms and relationships and partners.

Students said to me that does not happen in our society. That problem is out there and does not relate to us. I find myself challenged in those situations to think this through very thoroughly and be careful how I say it. You have to be aware of all eventualities.

Instructor G considered the connections students make between the topic and the instructor:

You have to approach things carefully. It’s your approach to it. In my country, you could lecture on a topic, you did not have to excuse yourself from the topic. I feel like one of my obstacles is they link you with the topic.

Instructors discussed the importance of carefully filtering their words and topics with students to ensure what and how they talked about a topic was culturally

appropriate. Preparation and preparing the students for lessons or units in which social problems or medical problems could be considered culturally inappropriate to talk about was discussed.

Subtheme 1.2: Students have to connect with you before they can connect with the teaching. Several group members pointed out that when a positive relationship was forged with students, students were more willing to listen carefully and try to understand. As Instructor A stated, “Here I find I have to become more warmer and friendlier to overcome certain barriers. To reach them more. Is much more here than in other teaching jobs I have had.” When asked how Instructor G approached this issue of building a connection with students, she stated the following:

They need to identify with you and understand you are not here in judgment of them. It’s more important here that they identify positively with you. It is much more important here than anywhere else that they identify positively with you. It is the way you have to navigate the topic. You have to get them to identify with you first.

Instructor G went on to describe the amount of energy it took to build a connection with students as “that constant connecting or building a connection and nervous energy to keep them with you. Sometimes it feels like a five-hour workout in the classroom.”

Classroom behavioral obstacles to teaching and learning were also considered within a discussion of building connections with students. Instructor F talked about difficulties she experienced attempting to understand what her students understood:

I will ask them out loud to explain a problem. Many students complained about me and said I was trying to humiliate them. Now I say at the beginning of the semester, if you do not want to be asked, let me know.

Participants discussed the importance of building a connection with the students. This connection was viewed by some as important to achieve prior to presenting course material that might be considered culturally sensitive to discuss such as medical problems or social problems. When a connection with the students was not there, this was perceived as an obstacle to both teaching and learning.

Subtheme 1.3: Sense of collective support. Examples were given by participants in regard to the student's sense of collective support for each other. Instructor D viewed this collective support as both a strength but also at times a teaching challenge:

Their sense of collective support, they talk for each other. Someone else is having a problem and another student comes to speak for her. In some instances it is helpful because you hear another side of problems.

The other thing [is] they help each other to understand what is being said in Arabic in the moment. I often say to them, OK now repeat what you said in English so I know you said it correctly. I do allow that because some students might be able to explain better, but I don't encourage it.

Instructors E and B talked about students' collective support within the context of attempting to help weaker students. As Instructor E stated, "They feel obliged to help the weaker students. They are desperately trying to help each other, passing notes and whispering. They will also come to me, Sir, please help. This person is not doing very well." Instructor B added,

If one student is in the class, their classmates are not around; they want to represent them. I say, let's do the exam review, one or two people are listening, they want the papers for the other; they ask me can you send her that email too. Instead of representing themselves, they are talking about the whole class or a group of people.

Instructors gave a variety of examples of how they were pressured to help missing or absent students and academically weaker students. They also discussed how this collective mindset impacted the classroom in both positive and challenging ways.

Subtheme 1.4: You teach, we learn mindset. The general lack of understanding on the part of the students in regard to their responsibility in student-centered learning was highlighted and described by one participant as “You teach, we learn mindset.” As Instructor D pointed out, “Firstly, even getting to class on time. Students do not understand their role as learners. If they understood this, they might be more willing to come on time and stay to the end.” Instructor B added that students “don't identify with learning as their responsibility.”

I asked the group if a part of the issue was that students did not understand their role in student-centered learning. Instructor B responded in this way: “Well, students have to understand what their responsibility is. I don't think they know. It is not their student-centered learning. How can you call this student-centered learning? It is totally teacher-centered learning.”

Instructor G also pointed out that a required first-year course included teaching on student responsibility, self-awareness, and positive thinking. She voiced that there was

resistance to these concepts in part because the concepts were not practiced outside the classroom.

A commonality among participants included the opinions that students did not understand their role in student-centered learning. This identified obstacle was highlighted as a disconnect between the college goal of a student-centered learning environment and how the students perceived their role in the learning process.

Theme 2: Second-Language Teaching Issues. “We are all English teachers even if we are not.” Codes categorized and themed as “We are all English teachers even if we are not” included instructor concerns that every concept taught needs a review of underlying concepts and terminology (see Appendix I for the codebook and emergent theme and subtheme definitions). My questions included asking for examples of language or translation problems encountered while teaching. Instructor F verbalized the following:

It is not my subject, but part of my courses is an English course. English is so difficult for them. I am not defending them fully, their habit is not to read the full progression but just some of the words. They miss the context then of how the word is used.

Instructors E and B emphasized the amount of time and energy needed to help students understand English vocabulary. As Instructor E stated, “We waste so much unnecessary time at this level using correct words and ensuring they understand it. We are to support them so every lecture we are an English teacher whether we are qualified to be or not.” Instructor B went further to discuss the challenges inherent in assisting students to understand a full concept:

I may know the meaning or translation to the word. My vocabulary for that specific term may not be so broad, so when I get into an example, it requires another level of understanding before I bring the students to understand. First they have to understand the term, then they have to understand the example in the use of the term. It is a double-barreled problem. I have to go into several levels to help students understand.

Instructor B was newer at the college and added the challenges faced by instructors of modifying concepts for second-language learners:

Many of you understand and know how to modify things. I feel like the faces I see, they don't understand what I am talking about and don't grasp it. Whatever level of translation they do, their faces tell me they don't understand.

Instructor D added challenges in assisting students to understand discipline specific terms:

Discipline-specific language and translation and interpretation of the words are problems. I emphasize use of certain terminology. When they grasp the terminology but they don't make the link to the content, then it is watered down. I try to break down the words. Where does it come from and what is an example.

Focus group members articulated the opinion that there is no "taking for granted" that students understand the basis of what they were talking about in second-language teaching environments.

Theme 3: Prior Learning Issues. "Good at rote learning but do they actually understand?" Codes categorized and themed as "Good at rote learning but do they actually understand?" included instructor concerns of prior student learning and habits of

rote memorization that influenced students' present learning (see Appendix I for the codebook and emergent theme and subtheme definitions). In regard to prior learning issues, Instructor A had this to say:

They are quite good at terminology because they are good at rote learning but they don't actually understand. So when it comes to my subject, getting them to see the workings of body processes is quite difficult and they lose some of the meaning there. So learning terminology is not a problem, but the subject matter is quite challenging, to help them understand. . . .They can memorize great but they don't understand what it means. They don't practice it.

Instructor E went further to highlight specific challenges to application: "They can do well with what they memorize but application is hard." This was linked to student expectations that a student would be able to memorize and succeed in the course. As Instructor E stated,

Students also expect and have the experience of having the same examples on tests as given in class. If you do not use the same example and even change the order of the words, they struggle with it due to problems applying and really understanding what they are learning.

As voiced by faculty, student backgrounds of memorizing as opposed to application presented problems for all instructors but particularly when course material required application.

Theme 4: Instructional Strategies. Towards the end of the focus group, instructional strategies that instructors used and believed were effective were explored. Codes categorized and themed as "Instructional strategies that work" included these

identified strategies (see Appendix I for the codebook and emergent theme and subtheme definitions).

Instructor G began by talking about asking students to mark their own assessments using the course rubrics. Instructor G emphasized that most of the time the rubrics are accurate, then most students do not challenge me. This is good for me because the challenging of marks really affects me. They take it seriously, I tell them they have to justify their high marks and their low marks. I find it works.

Instructor D added the importance of carefully observing students:

I try to read their faces to see if they look dazed or acknowledge understanding. I also give them as much feedback as possible in their assessment. That answers their questions. When they have the feedback, they don't challenge as much.

Instructor C discussed the use of assessment questions.

Students have to tell me how they came to the answers. They know what they learned and how they learned. These are not questions as much about grading as understanding.”

Finally, Instructor A stated she believed a summary at the end of class was important for her students. “I also make them do a summary at the end of each class regarding what they learned. They have to summarize for example how body parts work together.”

A common idea among the strategies highlighted by instructors was use of strategies that helped them to gauge student understanding.

Summary

Faculty voiced teaching obstacles of differing teaching and learning expectations between instructors and students. Additionally, the importance of carefully selecting words to ensure topics were presented in ways that were culturally appropriate was another stated concern. Additional obstacles included the expectations that some English language learning would be taught or emphasized in all courses, or as one instructor stated, “We are all English teachers even if we are not.” Also expressed were obstacles of students’ prior learning issues and student difficulties with application. Finally, strategies that the instructors found to be effective were explored.

Comparison of Student and Faculty Perceptions of Obstacles

Analyzed data from student semistructured interviews, faculty surveys, and focus group were analyzed using structural coding (Saldana, 2016). Structural coding is used to “examine comparable segments, commonalities, differences and relationships” in the data corpus (Saldana, 2016, p. 100).

Categories common to both students and instructors were grouped into themes and compared. Four broad structural themes were identified that were common to both research questions and linked to the research question variables of obstacles to learning and teaching and to second-language learning and teaching. These included Differing Teaching Expectations and Behaviors of Instructors, Differing Learning Expectations and Behaviors of Students, Second-Language Teaching Challenges for Instructors, and Second-Language Learning Challenges for Students. Figure 4.1 below shows the comparison and contrast between themes of instructors and students.

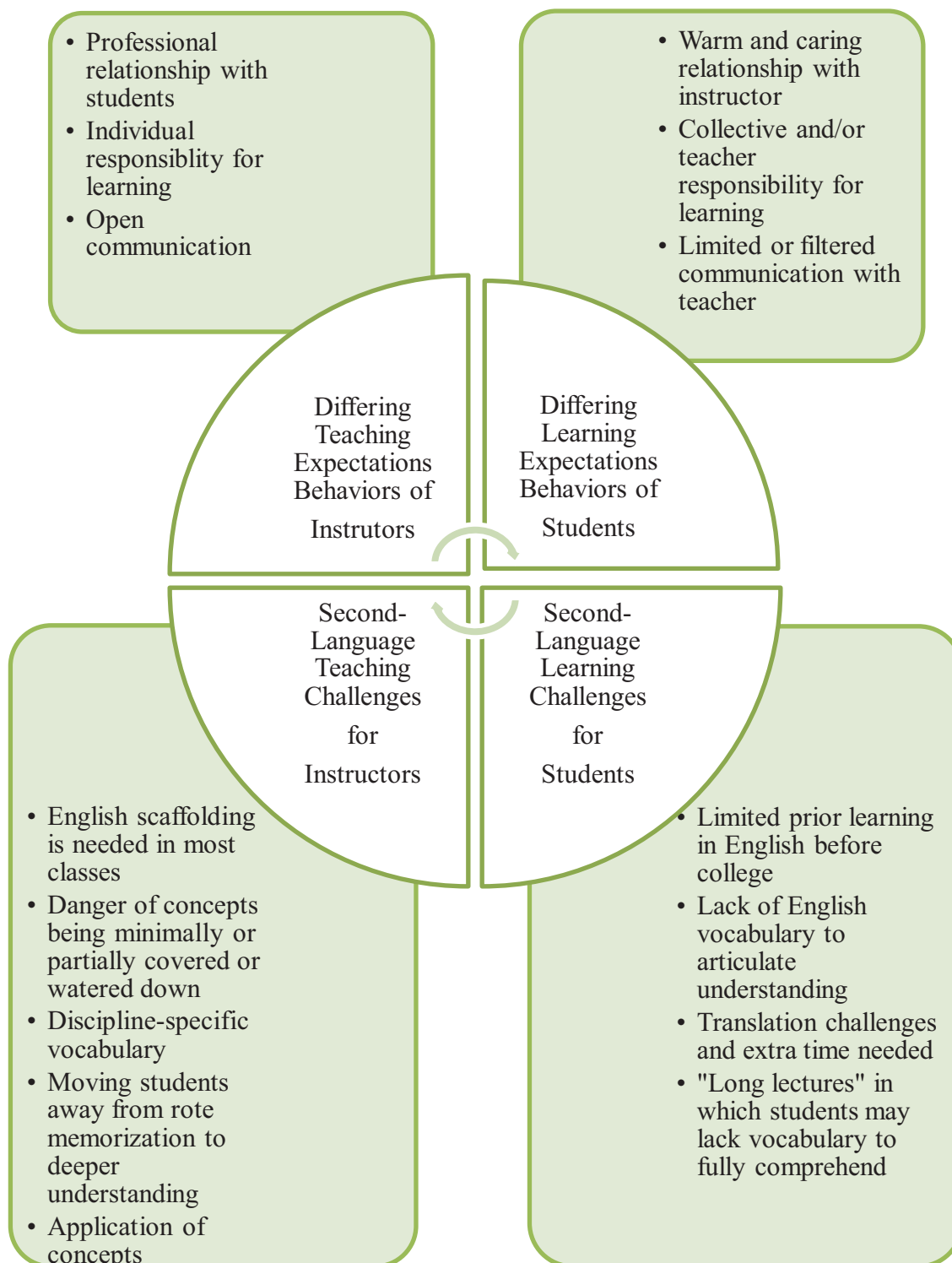


Figure 4.1 Comparison of Student and Instructor Expectations and Challenges

Discussion of Phase I

This discussion will include an interpretation of the findings for research questions 1 and 2, and end with a comparison of the perceptions of students and faculty. Additionally, a summary of strategies identified by both groups that could positively impact their second-language learning environment is provided.

The discussion of each research question will be subdivided into findings regarding obstacles in learning and teaching expectations, language, and teaching strategies.

Research Question 1: Student-Perceived Obstacles

Learning and teaching expectations. Learning behaviors was an area in which students identified challenges or obstacles to learning. Students Amna, Bakhita, Dalal, and Eiman all talked about perceived difficulties in questioning the instructor when they did not understand. As Eiman stated and was translated by the translator, “She makes an effort to translate or at home looks up the answer or seeks examples. She is sometimes shy and does not want to interrupt her teacher.” This phenomenon, that Arab students are socialized to listen to their instructors and not question their knowledge, is partially supported in the literature and previous research findings (Al Issa, 2005; Veeran, 2013).

Language. Limited English vocabulary and translation challenges, were noted as obstacles by the students. For example, limited English language was highlighted by Amna and Bakhita who both talked about past and current needs to translate word for word when studying. Students Amna, Bakhita, and Cala all discussed difficulties with expressing what they meant. Bakhita provided an example as stated by the translator: “She understands the question well but when she writes, the teacher understands

something different than what she meant.” Additional problems included translation problems and the time this takes. Cala added problems with literal translations when using web-based translation such as Google Translate. This finding is consistent with problems noted in the literature and particularly the point that native-Arabic speakers cannot rely on their first-language abilities for building second-language, English competency (Gallagher, 2011; Goodwin, 2013).

Teaching strategies. Students identified teaching strategies that helped them learn and those that did not. Examples included long lectures that were viewed as difficult to cope with, as expressed by students Amna and Bakhita and translated by the translator: “Very quickly they feel very bored and it just comes a point where they just want to leave the class.” Students also verbalized the need for case studies and examples that linked to their culture. Students highlighted their desire to connect to the learning material and the importance of examples to further their learning. Yet the stories or examples had to be ones that each could relate or connect to. Case studies that did not clearly link to UAE culture, or where the instructor did not assist students in understanding the link, were viewed as ineffective. This finding is supported in the literature and the importance of using culturally relevant strategies to assist second-language learners in making connections (Goodwin, 2013; Kolikant, 2011). In regard to social work andragogy, this finding is also supported, as the importance of contextualizing social work education and presenting real world practice problems assists students in gaining relevant knowledge and skills (Altshuler & Bosch, 2008; Veeran, 2013). Yet Sloan, Bromfield, Matthews, and Rotabi (2017) emphasize that while social work faculty working in Arabian Gulf countries often do contextualize case studies, there

is a dearth of local teaching materials that highlight indigenous theories and practice models.

Research Question 2: Instructor-Perceived Obstacles

Learning and teaching expectations. Data from the faculty open-ended survey and focus group indicated that instructors perceived second-language environment obstacles in the areas of differing expectations between themselves and their students, amount of English scaffolding needed in most classes, and their students' background of prior learning. In regard to differing expectations, instructors talked about having to carefully filter their words, build a connection with students, work and teach within a student-collective cultural perspective, and students' perception of the instructor's role as responsible for student learning. Expectations and difficulties with open communication were highlighted in Instructor A's point that "You have to be careful, your words can get so easily misconstrued." Similarly, Instructor G suggested that without connection, communication became difficult: "It's your approach to it. In my country, you could lecture on a topic, you did not have to excuse yourself from the topic." This finding is consistent with the literature and issues that arise from differences in cultural patterns. In this case, instructors who are socialized and use Western teaching methods with Eastern or Arab students have different cultural patterns and expectations of teaching (Al Issa, 2005).

While instructors acknowledged the importance of connection in the current context of teaching, they also highlighted previous expectations of more professional relationships with students. For example, Instructor A pointed out that her previous relationships with students were more professional, and there was a need in her present

context to be friendlier to overcome barriers. Instructors also struggled with student responsibility for learning, and Instructor D stated that “students do not understand their role as learners.” This finding connects with previous UAE studies and issues noted with students who may have come from secondary schools that used mostly teacher-centered approaches (Burt, 2004; Madsen, 2009; Shukri, 2014). Collective or teacher responsibility for learning was also confirmed, as a student expectation, by both instructors and students. As Instructor B, for example, pointed out, “Instead of representing themselves, they are talking about the whole class or a group of people.” However, Cala talked about the responsibility of the instructor to keep the class active: “The teacher must make the class active so we not feel lazy and sleepy.”

Language. Second-language challenges experienced by instructors were emphasized many times in the data corpus, particularly the theme “We are all English teachers even if we are not.” For example, the point of Instructor E in regard to the need for English scaffolding in most classes was, “We waste so much time unnecessary, at this level using correct words and ensuring they understand it.” Concepts being superficially covered and her struggle to help students understand discipline specific vocabulary was highlighted by Instructor D. “When they grasp the terminology-but they don’t make the link to the content –then it is watered down.”

This connected to Instructor A’s point regarding problems with rote memorization, and the theme of prior learning issues. “They are quite good at terminology because they are good at rote learning but they don’t actually understand.” Instructor E added the issue of memorization as opposed to application, : “They can do well with what they memorize but application is hard for them.” This finding is also

supported by previous studies regarding the regional history of rote memorization as well as problems with application among students from the UAE and Saudi Arabia (Burt, 2004; Shukri, 2014; Vassall-Fall, 2011).

Teaching strategies. Instructors highlighted more general strategies that helped them to gauge student understanding. These included such strategies as asking to students to mark their own assessments using their rubrics, careful observation of students to gauge understanding, providing feedback, and asking students to verbalize to the instructor how they formulated their answers.

Comparison of Findings

Learning and teaching expectations. Differing expectations between students and instructors included the teaching relationship. Student expectations of a warm and caring relationship with the instructor, as suggested by instructors, were confirmed by students during a second round of interviews during Phase II. Amna, for example, stated, “It greatly affects students and helps me to focus on my studies,” while Eiman stated, “I want from my instructor to understand me; it really affects me and brings me good marks.” This can be contrasted with Instructor A’s point that “previously, my relationship with students was more professional. Here I find I have to become more warmer and more friendlier to overcome certain barriers.” Different expectations in regard to open communication can be seen through examples of instructors coping with demands to filter their communication, such as Instructor G’s point that “you have to approach things carefully,” and student sensitivities to asking the instructor for clarification, such as Amna who would ask her friends instead of the instructor for clarification. Differing expectations also included who was responsible for learning. Again instructors pointed to

differing expectations, and Instructor D described “their sense of collective support; they talk for each other.” As Instructor B stated, “Students don’t identify with learning as their responsibility.”

Language. The need for English scaffolding in most classes due to many students’ history of limited English learning prior to college. As Instructor F stated, “It is not my subject, but part of my courses is an English course. English is so difficult for them.” This can be compared to Cala’s point as translated by the translator: “She can answer well in Arabic but in English, her answer is generic because she cannot find the right words.” Challenges of helping students understand discipline-specific vocabulary and complex concepts were also highlighted by Instructor D: “When they grasp the terminology but they don’t make the link to the content, then it is watered down.” This can be contrasted with the translation challenges experienced by students. As translated by the translator, Bakhita stated, “It takes her a lot of time to study. She uses Google Translate a lot to understand the material, but it takes her a long time to translate.” Finally, instructors discussed challenges in helping students to apply concepts as opposed to memorizing them. As stated by Instructor E, “They can do well with what they memorize but application is hard. They have problems completing basic equations.” Yet students provided some suggestions that could help them with application. These included instructors foregoing long lectures and using more contextualized activities such as case samples, group work, and activities.

Teaching strategies. A final summary of teaching, learning strategies, and scaffolding identified by instructors and students is presented in Table 4.6 below.

Table 4.6 Instructor-and Student-Suggested Pedagogical Strategies

Instructors-Identified Strategies	Student-Identified Strategies
Ask students to self-mark assessments using assigned rubric.	Arabic glossary in each Blackboard Learn course as well as embedding key words in Arabic in course materials.
Make positive connections with each student.	Provide stories, case studies, and/or examples that are linked to the cultural context.
Provide as much individual feedback as possible.	Provide ongoing feedback particularly in courses that teach skills but also on assessments.
Base teaching examples on research and the cultural context.	Use local examples or case samples.
Summary activity at the end of lessons or units such as answering questions.	Questions at the end of lessons or units.
Help students to understand their role and responsibilities in student-centered learning.	Provide activities related to the teaching in which the link between the activity and lesson or unit is clear.
Ask students orally and in writing to explain how they came to their answers.	Provide activities where students can learn in groups and learn from each other.
Warn students you will randomly call on them during class. Allow them to decline being called on.	Short lectures as opposed to long lectures.
Learn the names of all students so you can call on them.	The instructor speaks slowly as opposed to quickly.

While instructors' highlighted strategies that they perceived could help students understand, students asked for teaching approaches that helped them connect to their

learning such as the use of local examples, stories from the instructor's own experiences and key links to the Arabic language.

Summary. A final comparison and contrast of differing expectations and challenges of students and instructors learning and teaching in a second-language environment could suggest the following. Differing expectations between instructors and students of what teaching and learning should be intersects with a second-language learning environment in which students may have a background of limited prior learning in the second language. This results in consistent teaching and learning challenges that require additional scaffolding.

Phase II Findings

The second phase of the study explored the following research subquestions:

- a) How can a flipped classroom pedagogy be used to support comprehension and engagement for native-Arabic, female English language learners in an undergraduate social work course?
- b) How can a flipped classroom pedagogy provide faculty who are non-Arabic speakers opportunities to support native-Arabic, female English language learners in an undergraduate social work course?

Data was collected through 16 research journal entries, 14 field note entries, 12 audio transcriptions of portions of the flipped class, and a document content analysis of one midsemester exam question. Additionally, post-flipped-class interviews were conducted with five students to understand their experiences learning in a flipped class and how a flipped class approach could be used to support their learning.

Findings for Phase II are presented both chronologically and according to each research question. Planning and implementation of the flipped class are presented first and addresses research subquestion b regarding ways non-Arabic-speaking faculty can support English language learners. This is followed by a presentation of findings that addresses research subquestion a regarding ways a flipped class can support engagement and comprehension. Analysis of student engagement is organized according to a multidimensional definition of behavioral, cognitive, and emotional aspects of engagement (Handelsman et al., 2005; Mandernach, 2015; Skinner et al., 2014). Comprehension and how a flipped class pedagogy can support comprehension are addressed through a content analysis of a midsemester exam question responses and post student interviews. Phase II findings are followed by a Phase II discussion and a final conclusion that integrates findings from Phase I and Phase II.

Research Subquestion b.

Data from Phase I was used to inform the implementation of the flipped class and address specific ways a flipped classroom pedagogy could provide faculty who are non-Arabic speakers with opportunities to support native-Arabic, English language learners. Following the Phase I student interviews, faculty survey, and focus group, I began to prepare for the fall semester flipped class. I incorporated both feedback from Phase I and practices highlighted in the literature that benefit second-language learners. A sample calendar and sample activities can be found in Appendix K. See Chapter 3 for implementation timeline. See Appendix G for a summary table of obstacles and recommendations identified by students and faculty, recommendations from the

literature, and ways that recommendations were incorporated to address identified obstacles.

Flipped Class Implementation Findings

Data to address the second research question of how non-Arabic-speaking faculty could use a flipped class to support learning included my research journal, field notes, and transcriptions from the question-and-answer portion of 12 classes.

Flipped Class Implementation. Following the faculty focus group and student interviews, I drafted a contextualization plan for the flipped class that included suggestions made during the interviews and focus group. As indicated in my research journal, in mid-August, I contacted the translator who helped me embed Arabic key words throughout the course materials (see Appendix H). Due to issues of differences in word meaning because of context and culture, the translator and I spent time reviewing what words meant within the context of an English language social work course (Khalifa, 2015). Videos were created using Camtasia and a webcam that included a side-by-side presentation of slides and myself explaining the material. Being visible to the students through this online lecture format was another way I hoped to build a connection with the students and increase interactivity (Lui & Jernigan, 2013; Han, 2015). In all, 23 video and PowerPoint presentations were created, prior to the start of the semester that explored social work with families. Additionally, as noted in my research journal, “two orientation videos that addressed some of the disconnect between faculty and students, such as addressing issues with the instructor, understanding the instructor is not the topic, learner responsibilities, and class expectations, were developed. I also provided a second video on learning in a flipped class and what students could expect. With some assistance of the

translator, culturally relevant case samples were developed along with other possible class activities.”

A subsequent research journal entry stated, “class activities are designed to include as many group activities as possible to build on collective strengths of the cultural context.” Finally, quizzes were developed for the learning modules. Initially, quizzes were developed for every other module, but students quickly began to request quizzes for every module. The quizzes were not part of the graded course assessments, although they were marked to give students feedback on their performance.

Implementation Successes. Implementation successes included the orientation for the flipped class, integration of online and in-class activities, online media and activities, and increased class time for activities such as group work, role-play exercises, and case samples that supported course learning outcomes for family social work.

Orientation. During the first week of class, I spent time providing a flipped class orientation and expectations for the coming semester. The first orientation session focused on obstacles noted by students and faculty during the previous semester’s interviews and focus group, such as class discussions and questioning the instructor. I noted in my research journal,

I was nervous initially explaining the project—more in the beginning because the class was quiet. Then, as they thought about the questions, they responded. I talked about the issue of addressing problems or clarity issues with the instructor, but several in the class continued to say they would ask their friends if they did not understand and not the teacher. We were able to agree that during group work,

I would give as much feedback to groups and meet with each group to see if there were problems or concerns.

By the second class session, my field note entry describes the continued orientation process:

First we did the case sample activity and then answered the questions in large groups. After break, I asked them to complete the quiz in pairs so they would know how to use the quiz feature in Blackboard Learn. I also showed them how the quizzes were set so they could see the correct answers and my feedback.

By the beginning of the second week of classes, my research journal entry indicates the success of the orientation class sessions: “The videos, group work, discussions, and overall understanding of a flipped classroom seem to be working. More positive feedback on the chunked videos.”

Integration of online and in-class activities. At the end of the first week, the first content videos were assigned. During the second week of classes, a common schedule was implemented that was used throughout most of the rest of the semester. First, a question-and-answer session was implemented to provide a connection for students to link concepts from the videos and other online activities to the in-class activities (Engin & Donanci, 2014a). This was followed by small-group work, large-group work, summary, and time at the end of class to watch videos or catch up on quizzes. As noted in my research journal,

It is apparent that the question-and-answer sessions are too quiet with one or no questions being asked. I wonder if this ties into students not wanting to question the teacher. I did ask them today if they could tell me the three most important

points of the chapter. This stimulated some discussion. I am wondering if I need to switch the Q and A to some type of summary activity for the video or structure it in some way?

My field notes and research journal entries note the improvement of the question-and-answer sessions after I provided more structure: “I understand better how to use Q and A. Some reliance on the instructor is always there,” and “I asked the class to give me a question they had about the material as opposed to asking if they had questions. Worked much better.” By the first week in October, I noted increased engagement in the class: “The structured beginning activity is working well, but I still need to implement an end activity. Class activities are going right to the end of class.” On the 25th of October I noted in my journal, “We tried the new question-and-answer format where they each had to ask a question about the chapter. All except two asked a relevant question.”

Online media and activities. Almost immediately several students began to comment that they liked the videos better than the lectures, in part because the videos were shorter and to the point. Additionally, students asked for quizzes to be implemented in all 10 learning modules and not just the five modules originally planned. As noted in my research journal, “The videos and quizzes are doing their part. The students pointed out these are working for them and their understanding during the discussion demonstrated this.” Fatima, for example, talked about how she could use the videos to increase her understanding: “I can review and go back if I do not understand.” Ghalia added how the videos and quizzes worked together to help her make connections:

The videos, it is like preparing us for the next session. It makes us search and understand more the words . . . I notice that when I listen to the video, do the

exam, listen in class, I feel more power and more knowledge, I think about something, I connect things.

Class activities. Case studies, small group, and role-play activities were used during class time to assist students in applying theory to practice examples and develop their family counseling skills (Holmes et al., 2015). The flipped class provided increased opportunities for these types of activities. My field notes documented the following: “Students got right into the activity. The conversation at the end of the case sample was deeper than usual. First we did the case sample activity and then answered questions in large groups.” In later field notes I noted, “Group work very focused.” Later, my field notes stated, “We did role plays today and most were highly engaged.”

Implementation Challenges. Challenges included explaining complex topics. In my research journal I wrote about this: “I felt like I talked too much and my audio transcription confirmed this. I talked for 30 minutes. I tried hard to explain homeostasis instead of letting them explain it to me,” and “There was definitely more mobile use when I began to lecture.” I was also concerned about the amount of structure I provided as the semester progressed to assist students in making links between the online and in class activities: “I am still uncertain about the links between the videos and the class activities but several have said the quizzes seem to make up for the missing links or provide a connection between the two. I believe the quizzes are more important than the Q and A.”

As the semester progressed, I also noted that I was providing more email reminders to complete the quizzes. For example, I wrote, “Also emailing the class before each session to remind them of what they need to do like completing their quizzes.”

While I documented in my field notes that group work and role-play activities were going very well, my research journal notes, “Not enough feedback to students in regard to written assessments. Class activities are dominating too heavily.” Finally, no clear solution was reached regarding what students should do if they could not watch the video before class. I attempted to provide time, but it appeared students were embarrassed about others finding out they had not watched the videos. As noted in my journal, “At the end of class we had a discussion regarding how to handle not watching the video. As many are embarrassed if I ask who watched it, we decided that all students would bring their earphones to class and quietly watch the video during the Q and A session.” Even this did not work, as it appeared students did not want to be seen watching or listening to the videos in class.

Summary. Creation of the flipped class was informed by the semistructured student interviews and faculty focus group from the previous semester. Successes included creation of online materials to include videos, quizzes, written materials that included embedded Arabic key words, and culturally relevant class activities and case samples. Also successful were the orientation sessions, online materials, and increased class activities.

Challenges included finding ways to address complex topics without lecturing and students not always watching videos and completing online quizzes. While the question-and-answer sessions evolved as the semester progressed, there were challenges in regard to the amount of structure needed for these to be effective.

Findings: Student Engagement and Comprehension

How can a flipped class pedagogy be used to support comprehension and engagement for native-Arabic, English language learners? This research question was addressed using multiple sources of data to include transcriptions of class question-and-answer sessions, field notes, research journal entries, student interviews, and a document analysis. The findings for this section are divided according to the constructs of the research question: engagement and comprehension. The engagement section will highlight three sources of data collected during or immediately after classes, which include field notes, transcriptions of the first 20–30 minutes of classes, and research journal entries. A priori codes were used to analyze the data.

A document analysis as well as post-flipped-class interviews with students were used to explore comprehension. Finally, the post student interviews are presented separately but are also analyzed using a priori codes of engagement, comprehension, and future improvements as well as emergent subtheme codes of online activity comprehension and in-class activity comprehension.

Engagement. To understand engagement, a multidimensional definition of engagement was used to guide the data analysis process, which included analyzing engagement according to components of behavioral, cognitive, and emotional aspects of engagement (Handelsman et al., 2005; Mandernach, 2015; Skinner et al., 2014). Behavioral engagement is defined as observable behaviors in which students are demonstrating or not demonstrating connection to the material or responding to the learning task. Affective engagement is defined as the student's expression of emotion in regard to the learning task and/or environment, and cognitive engagement is the student

expending mental energy to make cognitive connections (Mandernach, 2015; Skinner et al., 2014). Field notes, audio transcriptions, and my research journal were analyzed using a priori codes of behavioral, affective, and cognitive engagement. Through the coding process, the following subthemes emerged. Behavioral engagement subthemes included participation in class, interaction with instructor and/or peers, and preparation and organization. Affective engagement subthemes included feelings generated in response to course or course-related material or feelings generated in response to issues outside of the class. No subthemes were identified for cognitive engagement.

Behavioral engagement. Students demonstrated behavioral engagement through participating during class activities, asking questions, and preparing for class.

Participation. Field note entries indicated an increase in attentiveness and participation, particularly during small-group work and class role-play exercises. For example, I stated in my field notes, “Again, I observed active participation by all group members. Much less mobile use than in the past.” In addition, “All members of the class readily worked on the case sample. None were on their mobile phones.” Another field note entry stated, “During family role plays, all came to the front, very attentive.” Field notes also revealed that students were particularly focused when the activity linked directly to the local context or culture. For example, “The conversation at the end of the case sample was deeper than usual.” This observation was also supported by the research journal: “The class activities, which so far appear to be culturally relevant, are stimulating a lot of discussion.” And “I did notice that the power of the group helps Ilham and Bakhita. They were both working and not using their mobiles during group work. The same for Halima.”

Field notes were supported by research journal entries in other areas. For example, my journal entry states, “The large group discussion was amazing with lots of good insight and participation from all members of the class.” In addition “Groups worked well with limited mobile use. Bakhita moved to the front of the class and Ilham was much more active as evidenced by the audio recordings.” Additionally, I noted in my journal, “Class activities are going right to the end of class.”

Inattentive behaviors were more likely to be noted during the question-and-answer portion of the class. As noted in the previous section and in field notes, during the first two weeks of class there was limited questioning. When I asked if they had questions, no one responded. This changed when I added additional scaffolding to the question-and-answer portion of the class. There was an immediate improvement in student participation, and as documented in my field notes, “when I asked the class for the main three concepts of the chapter, two students immediately answered,” and “structuring the Q and A worked well. Students were more attentive.” Eventually, I tried a less structured approach in which I asked each student to ask a question about the chapter. I noted in my research journal, “Trying new ways to do the activities is becoming easier. We tried the new question-and-answer format in which they each had to ask a question about the chapter. All except two asked a relevant question.”

An example of reviewing concepts and class participation was evident in the question-and-answer transcripts from October 4 in which 13 out of 14 students participated in the question-and-answer session. Below is a portion of the transcript.

Instructor: So what do you do to prepare for the first family visit. What do you do?

- Amna: You read the information about the family from the referral
- Eiman: You begin to put together a plan.
- Instructor: Tell me more.
- Eiman: If there is a conflict, you get an idea of what you will have to talk about.
- Instructor: So planning includes reading the referral which can give you an idea of what you need to address such as child abuse. What about a phone call to arrange a visit or introduce yourself and answer the questions?
- Fatima: They may ask, Why do I need to come?
- Instructor: Yes.
- Cala: Miss, could it be I need to ask how many people in the family?
- Fatima: Make sure they will be at home when I arrive if I make a home visit.
- Dina: You ask them about the time and location of the visit.
- Instructor: Yes, you check the time. If they come to your office, you want to provide directions. What else do you need to think about?
- Fatima: Their culture and neighborhood attitude.
- Ilham: Something about their history.
- Fatima: Their medical and mental health abuse report.

However, as mentioned, inattentiveness was noted more during the question-and-answer sessions. As I documented in my field notes, “I saw more students on their mobile phones. Seems to be happening more during Q and A,” and “Some increased talking

among themselves, at the end of the question-and-answer session before moving on to the class activity.”

Additional scaffolding was also added to the role-play activities. As more skills were learned, role-play activities were added in which four to five students demonstrated social work skills during role play. Structured feedback was added as indicated in my field notes: “Did ask all class members to provide one positive and one negative feedback to each class member. Difficult for them to do with Fatima.” In the next class session, I documented the following: “I also continued with asking for both positive and areas of weakness feedback from the class. They did better providing this today and seemed less shy.”

Interaction and questioning. Questioning both me and other students emerged as another subtheme. As the semester progressed, questioning increased in two areas: questions about how to use skills correctly and questions requesting individual feedback. In regard to the latter, students individually came to me as the semester progressed and asked for feedback on assessments, quizzes, and use of skills. Field notes documentation included “All worked on their quizzes and Bakhita and Khadija asked for feedback,” and “Several asked for feedback on their genogram projects.”

More significant, however, was the increased request for feedback on skills as the semester progressed. This increase was significant because it seemed to be in contradiction to student interview statements that they were uncomfortable questioning the teacher. Even during the course introduction/orientation statement, I noted in the research journal, “I talked about the issue of addressing problems or clarity issues with the instructor, but several in the class continued to say they would ask their friends if they

did not understand and not the teacher.” As the semester progressed, and student actively engaged in activities, this seemed to change. Question-and-answer transcripts indicated several examples of students asking complex questions related to the material, such as Fatima asking a question regarding the use of a family counseling assessment skill: “Miss, circular questions. We do not always need to ask every family member the same question, right? Some family members like kids might do better with drawing.” Also, Amna attempted to integrate material from this course with other courses: “CBT could you use, could you say to the husband, change how you think before you come to home?” These questions were asked within the context of small and large groupwork or class activities as opposed to a lecture format in a traditional class.

Preparation and organization. This behavioral engagement subcategory was related to behaviors that took place outside of class prior to in-class activity. In first three weeks of classes, I noted the following in Field Note entries, “Most students had watched the videos before class,” and “All appeared to have watched the course introduction module” and “Khadija was behind because she had been traveling, but she came and asked what she missed and asked me to check that what she was missing was correct.” At week five; however, I noted the following problems. “After break, I let those who needed to watch the videos or take the quizzes do so. I did have to go to some specific members and encourage them to watch the videos. In the end about six said they had watched all the videos. The rest, except for Bakhita, watched the videos or answered the quizzes during the end of class. Also, “One student has not taken any of the quizzes and some have not watched the videos. This appears due to the college moving towards points in the semesters where instructors are assigning more assessments.”

My research journal entries mirrored concerns documented in field notes: “I am worried that as we move closer to first assessment due dates the video viewing is dropping off.” Yet later I noted that “even though they have not all completed their quizzes, they overwhelmingly say they are helping. Activities today demonstrated they understood homeostasis,” and “they continue to tell me they like the videos and quizzes although some are behind on watching some.” I also questioned whether I was providing too much structure as the semester progressed as evidenced by my journal entry: “Am I reminding too much in regard to the videos and quizzes? I still question if I am providing too much structure.”

Affective engagement. Students demonstrated affective engagement through their emotions. These emotions were divided into emotional responses related to the course or course materials and emotional responses generated in response to issues outside of the classroom.

Emotional responses related to the course or course materials. Positive feelings were expressed in regard to videos, class activities, and specific learning during the semester. In regard to videos, early in the semester, students voiced they liked the shorter or chunked videos. For example, in my field notes I stated, “it was good and [Dina stated she] liked the shortness of the videos,” and “two students said they liked the chunking or shorter videos.” This was supported by my research journal: “The class seemed excited about the scaffolding such as embedded Arabic key words and the shorter videos. One student said the videos were better than lectures because “the student can pick which info she needs to study more and do it.” Later in the semester, students expressed positive

feelings about the videos and how the videos helped them prepare for the midsemester exam as indicated in the question-and-answer transcription:

Nasra: The videos we could watch them over again.

A later transcription highlights students' emotional responses to the learning material:

Instructor: What do we do when the family behaviors are adaptive?

Jamilia: No one interrupt each other? You encourage that.

Instructor: How do you do that? What skill do you use?

Cala: You put yourself in their shoes, and you say this is effective.

Instructor: So reflection? You say what you observed and point out that it was effective.

Ghalia: They will feel proud of themselves.

Jamilia: Miss, they learn new behaviors.

Instructor: You can imagine if this is a first time they have used effective communication, in other words they have been arguing a long time, you want to hold that mirror up so they can see their new effective behaviors.

Ghalia: Just imagining that I feel happy.

Emotional responses in response to issues outside of the class. Emotional reactions to issues outside of the class included previous experiences, current problems, and attachment to friends. In regard to the latter, during midsemester I wrote in my journal about concerns for one class member whose best friend was no longer in the class: "The strong attachment to friends. You really cannot underestimate the power. I

worry now that Bakhita will fall behind.” During a class discussion about family diversity and stereotyping, students collectively had difficulties empathizing with a case sample because they became very focused on their own experiences being stereotyped. Another journal entry notes,

Interesting in the second activity they had problems thinking about how they might stereotype other families because of the pain they have experienced being stereotyped themselves. One member talked about wearing a hoodie in Europe and how much better people treated her than when she wore her shela.

Cognitive engagement. Cognitive engagement was defined as making cognitive connections to the extent the student attended to and expended mental effort. This category focused on how well students could make connections with the material, integrate the material with this course or previous courses, as well as apply, evaluate, and use critical thinking skills in regard to what they were learning. For example, a question-and-answer segment demonstrates how students were able to connect their present learning to previous field education experiences:

Instructor: You do have to think about privacy. If a family comes to your office, you need to schedule a private room or make sure there is a private room available.

Cala: We took this with another teacher. You need to protect privacy of the clients.

Fatima: Yes, this happens in the courts, miss.

Eiman: But at [named another agency], not enough privacy.

Ilham: [Named another agency] was private and they took privacy seriously.

Laila: Also at [named a different agency].

Transcription 10 shows how students were able to master a concept:

Ilham: Miss, it's easy!

Instructor: That is good, because at the beginning of the week you were having difficulty with homeostasis. This is interesting. It sounds like the activities are helping you.

Fatima: I think it is the quizzes.

Nasra: Yes, miss, the quizzes.

Field notes provided examples of the amount of mental energy being exerted in class. For example, "Good insight during the group discussion following the case sample and question activity. A lot of input from different members of the class." While I highlighted the large group discussion in other field notes: "The class went deeper than on the previous day and were easily able to link concepts." My research journal entries emphasized the increasing critical stance students took towards the material: "The discussions have taken on a deeper, more critical look at the material." Also, I documented in field notes that "Ghalia was able to easily talk about and apply definitions of a family, and Laila made good connections to the videos." This was supported by my research journal: "Both said they had watched the videos. Ghalia talked about difficulty in defining a family, and Laila gave clear ideas regarding culture and roles."

Yet field notes and the research journal also highlighted problems with application, second-language issues, and the course structure itself. My field notes, for example, state,

I verbalized my thoughts out loud to the class that they understand the questions well in activities and discussions but not on tests. They all laughed and one student said, “we build on each other’s ideas in class. On tests we have to do this ourselves.”

Second-language problems were also highlighted in field notes: “Class had some difficulty with the vocabulary in the Diversity and Family Activity but did not seem to have problems understanding the questions,” and “some misconceptions regarding some of the terms.” Also noted were skills deficits or misconceptions from previous classes. My journal entries state, “Now that we are in role plays, though, I have to carefully watch and intervene. They have some specific skill deficits that are surprising.”

Problems with the question-and-answer section were also evident in my research journal entries: “Q and A are going too long. Emphasis on concept links between the videos and Q and A seems to work well but they are dragging out. Also drifting towards teacher-centered learning.” I noted problems with explaining complex concepts: “Complex concepts can be hard to break down in videos and in class. I think I need to introduce more case samples to help the class understand.”

Summary. Behavioral engagement subthemes emerged that demonstrated increased participation, interaction, and questioning in class. As the semester progressed, there were some issues noted with preparation and organization.

Students expressed positive emotions towards their learning activities and made cognitive connections to their learning in this class and with other classes. Some issues were noted with application and second-language problems.

Comprehension

Luke, Woods, and Dooley (2011) emphasize that comprehension is more than understanding something; it is a process of thinking to seek meanings and solve problems. To evaluate the effects of a flipped class on comprehension and critical thinking, a midsemester exam question was selected, analyzed, and compared to question responses from the same course and the same test question administered the semester before. As suggested by Gocer (2014), analyzing words and sentences in written text or content/document analysis can provide clarity regarding the level of comprehension by the student. While the interpretation of the results of the content analysis for this study is not analyzed statistically, this analysis can provide some clarity regarding the influence of a flipped classroom on comprehension.

For this analysis, one test question was selected that asked students to use higher order and critical thinking skills in their responses. Specifically, students were asked to examine two types of family assessment techniques and apply them to a case sample. Fourteen student responses were used from the flipped class and ten student responses from the semester before. Responses were coded using a rubric that included categories for examination and application, and criteria for depth of comprehension and application to include in-depth, moderate, partial, and no comprehension or application. Guided by the Revised Bloom's Taxonomy, Figure 4.2 was used to score the question responses (Green & Johnson, 2010).

Categories	In-Depth (25)	Moderate (20)	Partial (15)	Little to None (0-5)
<p>Examines: Student is able to inspect, differentiate and explain, providing facts/evidence to support statements.</p>	<p>Explains all aspects of the question and question concepts with exceptional detail, accurate subject knowledge, supporting facts, and /or evidence. All relevant information necessary for full understanding of the complexity of question is provided.</p>	<p>Explains the question and concept(s) with detail and supporting facts and/or evidence. The response is missing no more than one area of explanation, facts, or evidence, or minor issues with relevancy and/or connections to concepts.</p>	<p>Explains the question, theory, or concept(s) but answer lacks thorough explanation, inspection, and/or supporting facts or evidence, or missing one component of the question either because it is not addressed or response is inaccurate. Answer could also be partially inaccurate or example is not relevant to the case or question asked.</p>	<p>Provides no explanation or does not answer the question correctly.</p>
<p>Applies: Student is able to apply information to the case sample or through relevant examples.</p>	<p>Applies concepts or theories through application to a case sample and relevant examples.</p>	<p>Applies concepts or theories but missing some minor areas of application or minor problems with relevancy.</p>	<p>Applies to case but missing more than one area of application or applies in a general, superficial, or incorrect way.</p>	<p>Does not apply to case and/or provide examples.</p>

Figure 4.2 Test Question Rubric

Manifest content or the obvious content was evaluated through the rubric categories of examination, while latent content was evaluated using rubric categories of application or how the student applied and linked concepts to the case sample (Graneheim & Lundman, 2004).

Comprehension findings. While the students from the traditional course demonstrated slightly higher comprehension scores, perhaps the most significant difference was in regard to understanding the question: 30% of students from the traditional class did *not* appear to understand the question as compared to 14% from the flipped classroom. Table 4.7 shows a comprehension comparison between fall and spring semesters.

Table 4.7 Comparison of Comprehension Responses by Semester

Course	In-Depth Comprehension	Moderate Comprehension	Partial Comprehension	Little or No Comprehension
Spring 2017	30%	30%	10%	30%
Fall 2017	21%	28%	36%	14%

Question Score Application Comparison by Semester. Additionally, based on Mathis's (2015) definition of critical thinking and a social work student's ability to "focus on action" and apply skills to practice situations, scores were also compared in regard to the students' application of skills to the case sample. For example, forty-two percent of the flipped class students used a moderate or in-depth degree of application to a case sample as opposed to 20% of students in the traditional class. In-depth application included application of assessment tools with specific family members mentioned in the case sample, moderate application included application of at least one tool with a case sample family member, while partial application included a response that applied the

tools to the family either in a general or superficial way. No comprehension meant there was no comprehension of the exam question. Table 4.8 shows a comparison of overall student application responses by semester.

Table 4.8 Comparison of Application Responses by Semester

Course	In-Depth Application	Moderate Application	Partial Application	No Comprehension
Spring 2017	10%	10%	50%	30%
Fall 2017	14%	28%	43%	14%

The following examples are examples of in-depth, moderate, and partial student responses from both the flipped and traditional classes.

Comprehension examples. Examples of question responses will be shown next.

In-depth comprehension example. An in-depth examination and application included a student’s ability to differentiate or contrast assessment tools, investigate various aspects, and apply specifically to significant parts of a case. After defining a genogram and family timeline, a flipped class student stated,

1.1 A genogram helps to understand how each person is related to others and shows information about previous generations to help understand the problems more. While a timeline will help identify the main events that happen in this family. The events could lead to experiences of this kind of problem, e.g., ask parents, “When did you notice Reem first started having problems?” It will help them to identify strengths also and motivate them to change.

The student from the traditional class also provided clear definitions comparing and contrasting a genogram and eco-map. After defining both she stated,

1.2 Show the Ahmed family how to draw an ecomap, explain it to them. It will help Ahmed's family to know the problems and their strengths with different environments and what leads to current relationship problems and strengths.

This traditional class student did not clearly connect her answer to the case sample, however.

Moderate comprehension example. For moderate comprehension, the student needed to provide a solid contrast of assessment tools with application to the case. Problems with these responses included parts of the responses that were not relevant or focused, minor inaccuracies, or not specifically applying their responses to the case sample. In this example from a flipped class student, the student begins by applying her tools to the family. Then she discusses how she could use a genogram:

2.1 A genogram I would use to see if there is some case in the family history of a problem or a problem like Reem's and how the family coped with it. We could also see the family strengths. I would educate the family about them daughter case so they can better understand.

While her answer included four references to the case sample and how she would apply her assessment tools with the family, it lacked a thorough contrast of the tools.

A student from the traditional class provided thorough definitions of assessment types but no contrast and minimal application to the family:

2.2 Genogram shows the relationships and illnesses and patterns of family interactions and history. With this family it helps them to be aware of their repetitive problems from generations like illnesses that could come from the

grandparents. A timeline shows important events and make the family understand the time that start an event or what happened to make it start.

Partial comprehension example. A partial comprehension was an answer that mostly indicated memorization but no contrast, evidence to support examples, or application to the case sample. In regard to the flipped class, more students appeared to understand the question, but 29% provided responses in which they did not apply their answers to the case or provided definitions without contrast or differentiation of assessment types. A student from the flipped class provided the following partial response:

3.1 A timeline helps the family to know their history and how they cope with their problems. An eco-map I draw this map to show the family their relationships with their members and the environment so they can see where is the problems.

While her answer indicated some understanding, her lack of examples and application to the case made this a partial response.

A student from the traditional class stated,

3.2 Use a history to ask members what they do when Reem move around a lot and how they feel to help them to see the pattern.

While the student from the traditional class was able to apply her response to the case sample, her answer lacked clear understanding of the concept.

Summary. While the traditional course demonstrated higher in-depth comprehension responses, the flipped class demonstrated a higher degree of application. Additionally, the flipped class had overall more partial comprehension and application responses, while the traditional class had more no comprehension responses.

Post Student Interviews

Post student interviews took place during weeks 11 and 12 of the semester and addressed both research subquestions a and b. These questions included how a flipped class could support comprehension and engagement, and also how faculty who were non-Arabic speakers could use a flipped class to support learning.

Four out of five of the students interviewed for the post-flipped-class interviews were in the original group of students who were interviewed the previous semester. The fifth student from the original group did not enroll in the class, so she was not present. Fatima took her place. Fatima, like the other participants, was asked to participate based on diversity factors such as age, marital, and motherhood status to gain differing perspectives on the impact of psychosocial factors and cultural roles that could influence learning. (See Table 4.1 for Fatima's demographic data).

Similar to the student interviews that explored obstacles, students were interviewed in groups because of time pressures due to class scheduling, transportation issues, and the availability of the translator. Cala and Fatima were interviewed together, and Amna, Bakhita, and Eiman were interviewed together. The translator was present for both interviews.

Data from post student interview data was analyzed using a priori codes of engagement, comprehension, and future improvements. As mentioned in Chapter 3, a priori coding was because codes aligned with the constructs of the research questions helped me to answer the questions of how a flipped class could support comprehension and engagement among second-language learners (Saldana, 2016). Engagement was again classified according to behavioral engagement, affective engagement, and cognitive

engagement. In the following section, student voices will be highlighted to emphasize their experiences learning in a flipped class. Post student interview themes, sources, and response frequency patterns are depicted in Table 4.9.

Table 4.9 Post Student Interview A Priori Themes, Sources, and Response Frequency Patterns

A Priori Themes	Sources	Response Frequency Patterns
Engagement	5 out 5	34.98%
Comprehension	5 out of 5	38.45%
Future Improvements	5 out of 5	15.92

Engagement. As stated, engagement was categorized using a multidimensional definition to include behavioral, affective, and cognitive engagement.

Behavioral Engagement. Questions that focused on advantages and disadvantages of a flipped class led to student thoughts and statements about their behavioral engagement in a flipped class. I began by asking about advantages. Initially, Fatima emphasized the advantage of the online lecture: “I use the videos instead of story time for my daughter. I let her sit beside me and we watch the videos. But before that I read the Power Points. This puts the session inside my head.” When asked about the in-class activities, Fatima had this to say:

I like playing the roles. I take all strengths and I try to write what I have to do next time. I use the strengths and avoid weaknesses. I see myself more as a social worker when I do this.

Cala talked about the advantage of gaining a better understanding of what she understood and what she did not:

It helped me because I could ask questions I had the night before. So I liked when you said each person to ask a question. I asked about how to apply the theories. I want to use the theory; I want to know how this information we take is applied in real life. It helps when we ask you.

Questions about disadvantages of a flipped class led to discussions of *both* time management advantages and time management disadvantages of a flipped class. Bakhita emphasized the extra time to translate was helpful. Amna's response was also initially positive and translated:

Translator: The flipped class is very beneficial because if she is absent, she does not miss anything. She does not need to come and find time to review. Another thing: if she is not absent because she can see the video before the class it gives her time to understand the material and she will come to the class with the questions she does not understand.

Yet time management was also identified as an issue with the flipped class. Cala discussed the following:

Translator: She said there is two kinds of difficulties she faced. One is if she tried to use her break time and watch the videos in the college, it was too noisy because of the students around her. So she needed a quiet place where she could see it. This was one of the difficulties. Using her time at the college, quietness would be a challenge for her. The other difficulty, in her mind she knows the lesson is in the

video, so she would say “I will see it today, I will see it tomorrow” when you know you can see it at your own pace.

Fatima also pointed out problems when she did not watch the videos and complete activities before class: “If I watch the video before class, this is not a problem. But if I wait and do it after, it is a problem. When I prepare before class, and I write down my notes, then I can ask you if my example match with your example.” Perhaps the most difficult time management problems were highlighted by Amna and Eiman:

Translator: They do not have the time to see all the videos. With the block schedule, they are very busy and may not have the time to watch especially if they are at the college and need to watch them.

Bakhita added the following, via the translator: “The problem is she cannot cope with all of the videos because of the demands of other courses.”

Summary. While students provided specific examples of behavioral engagement, such as watching the videos, participating during class in role-play activities, and asking questions, they also discussed time management issues. The flipped class was seen as both helpful and a problem in regard to time management. Extra time to translate and being able to watch the videos at their own pace were viewed as positive. However, finding places to watch the videos at the college as well as the scheduling of back-to-back classes were seen as problems and interfered in watching the videos. Three students also emphasized the tendency to put off or wait to watch the videos, which dovetailed with the number of videos and difficulties in catching up if watching the videos was delayed.

Affective engagement. How did students emotionally respond to a flipped class? Amna’s response was translated: “She said she has a positive idea of the class activities,

but it takes a long time to do the role plays. She likes the feedback she gets from the teacher and the classmates.” And while Bakhita and Eiman struggled with time management, they also emphasized they liked the videos. As translated, “They liked the activities but they liked the videos the best.” Finally, Fatima explained her feelings about a flipped class in this way: “I like this better because sometimes I feel sleepy and boring in other classes and my mind becomes distracted. The flipped class, it works well for me.”

Yet students again reacted emotionally to time management issues. In Arabic, Amna talked about the pressures she felt: “But she also said there is a lot of pressure on them as students. They do not have the time to see the videos.” Eiman also stated, as translated, “The problem is she cannot cope with all of the videos because of the demands of other courses.”

Summary. Students expressed positive feelings about both the out-of-class activities and in-class activities. Yet they also expressed pressure and problems coping with the amount of out-of-class work (videos and quizzes).

Cognitive Engagement. Cognitive engagement was the cognitive connections students made to the course material and included mental effort, integration of concepts, and application. When asked about advantages of class activities during class time to help students learn course concepts, Cala stated the following:

The activities help you to understand in the situation, you have the information of what you are doing. You have it and you see it at the same time. Even from yesterday in the exam, I can remember what happens in the role play and I can write the questions. And in the class, the activities, it so useful, it makes me able

to have a role play session and have the experience, although I be nervous when I am the social worker.

Fatima talked about how class application of skills helped her to apply the skills: “When I see something, I like to apply it to my family. It makes me know better so I want to understand.” Eiman explained her challenges of practicing skills in a second language; her response was translated.

Translator: The only barrier in the class activities is the language. She prefers to be a family member not the social worker because the language barrier. She feels that if she could be the social worker in the role play and use Arabic, she would do much better.

Bakhita agreed and talked about other challenges as well:

Translator: She agrees but she also talks about the videos. When she gets the chance to watch the video, she spends time and takes good notes from it. This class was better because she liked to take notes, and it’s too fast for her to do this in class so the videos helped.

Summary. Several students verbalized being able to make connections between the class activities, their assessments, and their lives. Language barrier was voiced as an issue by Eiman. Videos were also highlighted as a way students could take their time making notes and understanding the material.

Comprehension. How well did the flipped class provide scaffolding to help students to understand the course? Two subthemes emerged from the data and included comprehension and out-of-class activities as well as comprehension and in-class activities.

Comprehension and out-of-class activities. This emergent subtheme involved student responses suggesting that watching videos and completing the online quizzes helped them or did not help them to comprehend course material. Students responded to questions regarding advantages of a flipped class. Cala highlighted the advantage of replaying videos: “When I hear it from the first time-I understand but when I hear the second and third time, it is so good.”

Fatima also emphasized this advantage, explaining, “I can review and go back if I do not understand.” Eiman highlighted advantages of embedded Arabic terminology and examples given in the videos. In regard to the latter, Eiman stated (as translated), “One of the benefits is the examples she finds in the videos. It helps her in the exams.” She emphasized the terminology advantage in this way:

Translator: The terminologies. There were a lot of benefits for her to have the definitions and the equivalent term in Arabic in the course material. She used to spend time trying to find the equivalent term in Arabic but this was better.

Bakhita also highlighted video advantages and talked about learning at her own pace:

Translator: It is beneficial for her to write her own notes in her own pace. In the classroom she has problem writing her notes because the teacher is faster than she can write. So the video she can run it again and take notes.

Finally, Amna talked about her comfort level in the course; as the translator said, “She says she is very comfortable with this course, the number of slides is just perfect. It makes them focus more.”

Yet students also voiced concerns of not enough time to watch the videos, no quiet place to watch the videos, and balancing the demands of other courses with the extra out-of-class activities required in a flipped class. This was a particular challenge for Bakhita: as the translator explained, “One of the challenges is sometimes she does not see the video and then you move onto the next video. She does not always find the time to see one video and then we move to another video.”

Cala also pointed out, as translated, “The other difficulty, in her mind she knows the lesson is in the video, so she would say ‘I will see it today, I will see it tomorrow.’”

Comprehension and in-class activities. This emergent subtheme was student responses to how participating in in-class activities helped them or did not help them in understanding the course. Cala emphasized that class activities were “too much helpful.” She also talked about how the in-class role-play activities helped her to learn skills: “With Mr. _____ [named the class instructor] we did not do the role play so we did not understand. But when we do role plays like now, we understand.”

Amna emphasized that feedback from class members after she practiced a role-play skill helped her to learn. However, Fatima talked about the case samples and how these helped her: “I like to have the case sample and apply what we study. I like it because it helps me to see myself as a social worker and understand how to apply. It makes us aware.”

Summary. Students discussed several benefits they thought had helped them with comprehension. These included being able to watch the videos more than one time, the shorter chunked videos, the embedded Arabic key words, and writing notes at their own pace. Students also pointed out that the shorter videos helped them to focus. Problems in comprehension included the number of videos, not being able to watch them all, and the freedom to wait to watch the videos if they became busy with other responsibilities. Class activities such as role-playing, group work, and case samples were viewed as helpful and ways that the course learning was reinforced.

Future improvements. A final a priori category was future improvements. I asked students what they would like to change if they took a flipped class in the future. Amna stated she would like more time to practice role play. Eiman considered instead the videos: “If the example you use in the video, if you could put this in the notes. She likes to see things in writing.” Bakhita talked again about the number of videos and suggested reducing the number of videos and including questions in the written materials; as the translator explained, “One of the challenges is sometimes she does not see the video and then you move onto the next video.” Eiman added that she hoped future classes included videos and more role-play activities.

Summary. Future improvements included additional case samples, incorporating questions in the videos, and role-play demonstrations.

Discussion of Research Questions a and b

Data collected to answer research subquestions a and b consisted of multiple sources of data to include transcriptions of a portion of 12 classes, field notes from 14 classes, 16 research journal entries, five student interviews, and a document analysis.

This data was collected and analyzed to gain an understanding of how a flipped class could be used to support comprehension and engagement for native-Arabic, English language learners as well as how faculty who were non-Arabic speakers could use a flipped class to support learning. This discussion will include an interpretation of the findings for each research question. The discussion for Research Question b will be further subdivided into areas of identified obstacles from Phase I to address how the flipped class may have provided non-Arabic speaking faculty opportunities to support second-language learners. These areas include teaching and learning expectations, language, and teaching strategies. The finding of Research Question a will be further subdivided into a discussion of engagement and comprehension and how a flipped class could be used to support engagement and comprehension of second-language learners.

Research Subquestion b: Non-Arabic-speaking Faculty and the Use of a Flipped Class to Support Student Learning

Field notes, audio transcripts, and a research journal, answered research subquestion b.

Teaching and learning expectations. Providing an orientation on the flipped class assisted the class in understanding what a flipped class was and what their responsibilities would be. As stated in my research journal, “Initially I asked the class to watch the second orientation video in class. This went very well. All watched and seemed enthusiastic.” Additionally, this orientation was contextualized to address concerns and obstacles raised in Phase I, such as class discussions and questioning the instructor. Support in the literature for a flipped class orientation includes Findlay-Thompson and Mombourquette (2008) who note the importance of helping students to understand what a

flipped class is, what their responsibilities are in a flipped class and allow students the opportunity to express concerns.

Language. The creation and implementation of chunked videos, online quizzes, and embedded Arabic words in course materials appeared to support student learning. As I documented in my research journal, “The class seemed excited about the scaffolding such as embedded Arabic key words and the videos. One student said the videos were better than lectures because “the student can pick which information she needs to study more and do it.” Cala pointed out during the post interviews,

I understood the video, it’s easy to understand . . .When I hear it from the first time, I understand but when I hear the second and third time, it is so good. I think it will help too much if all classes did it.

This finding is mostly consistent with literature findings that online lectures may be more effective than in-class, in-person lectures (Bishop & Verleger, 2013; Holmes et al., 2015). Eiman emphasized the benefits of flipped class for translation challenges, “especially the terminologies.” As the translator added, “There were a lot of benefits for her to have the definitions and the equivalent term in Arabic. She used to spend time trying to find the equivalent term in Arabic but this was better.” Additionally, as evidenced by the audio transcript, the online quizzes provided opportunities to reinforce complex course concepts. As one student stated, the quizzes helped her to understand difficult course concepts.

Teaching strategies. Yet while the creation of online materials helped students with comprehension, the creation of in-class, culturally relevant materials helped students with both engagement and comprehension. As I noted in my field note entry, “During

family role plays, all came to the front, very attentive.” Yet how much benefit the question-and-answer session was in regard to helping students make connections between online learning and in-class activities was not as clear. I documented in my research journal, “Also I was convinced that the Q and A session would be needed but now I am not so sure. I am leaning more towards a summary at the end of class.” This finding contradicts some recommendations in the literature that a revision or question-and-answer session is needed for second-language learners to be able to make links between online and in-class learning activities (Engin & Donanci, 2016b).

The most salient identified benefits from this study for supporting student learning included the orientation to a flipped class, culturally relevant SCL activities, chunked videos, and online quizzes. Of less benefit was the question-and-answer session.

Research Subquestion a: Native-Arabic, Female English Language Learners, Flipped Class, Engagement, and Comprehension

The use of a flipped class to support native-Arabic, female English language learners with engagement and comprehension was addressed through the collection of field notes, audio transcripts, research journal, a document content analysis, and interviews with students.

Engagement. Engagement was analyzed using a multidimensional definition of behavioral engagement, affective engagement, and cognitive engagement (Handelsman et al., 2005; Mandernach, 2015; Skinner et al., 2014).

Behavioral engagement. Three subthemes for behavioral engagement emerged including participation, interaction and questioning, and preparation and organization. An increase in attention and participation was noted during small-group work and role-play

activities, as explained in my field notes: “They were much more independent than in the previous class. Some kept working during the break.” Indeed, the flipped class benefits of learners taking more responsibility for learning through the provision of increased class activities is broadly supported in the literature (Bergman & Sams, 2012; Danker, 2015; Overmyer, 2014; Sage & Sele, 2015). Additionally, asking the instructor questions also increased during the semester, despite the initial hesitations, and is noted in the literature as a benefit of flipped classes (Findlay-Thompson & Mombourquette, 2015). As the questioning happened within the more informal context of small and large groupwork and class activities, it could be that the informal setting of the flipped class approach increased the comfort level of students to ask questions as opposed to the more formal, lecture format of a traditional college course. Indeed, Findlay-Thompson and Mombourquette (2015) point out that students in their study stated they felt more comfortable asking questions in a flipped class as they did not like to interrupt the instructor in a traditional class lecture.

Conversely, a decrease in attention was noted during large-group question-and-answer sessions. Preparation or watching the videos and taking quizzes also decreased periodically as the semester progressed. Students did report problems with the number of videos and, at times, time management, as evidenced by Cala’s comment that she knows the lesson is in the video, so she would say, “I will see it today, I will see it tomorrow.” This issue of self-regulation of learning and problems learners may have with out-of-class flipped learning requirements is supported by the literature, specifically in regard to students from Eastern countries who may have educational backgrounds of exposure mostly to teacher-centered learning styles (Casim & Yong-Chil, 2013; Sinouvassane &

Nalini, 2016). Additionally, even students learning in Western countries note an increased workload in flipped class due to mandatory video assignments as opposed to only course reading in traditional courses, which students often view as optional or simply do not read (Bishop & Verleger, 2013; Findlay-Thompson & Mombourquette, 2015).

Affective engagement. Affective engagement included emotional responses to the learning. While students expressed mostly positive feelings about their learning in a flipped class, such as Bakhita and Eiman’s comments that they liked the class activities but liked the videos even better, some expression of feeling overwhelmed by the amount of online requirements was expressed by Bakhita: “The problem is she cannot cope with all of the videos because of the demands of other courses.”

Cognitive engagement. Finally, positive cognitive engagement was demonstrated through student statements that individual pacing in online activities helped them to make connections, as well as the journal, field notes, and audio transcripts that documented examples of students actively making connections to course concepts. Indeed, specific to second-language learning, the ability and benefits for students to be able to learn at their own pace are broadly supported by previous research (Fallows, 2013; Feledichuck & Wong, 2014; Han, 2015). Cala, for example, described how she was able to integrate the in-class activities and learning with assessments:

You have the information of what you are doing. You have it and you see it at the same time. Even from yesterday in the exam, I can remember what happens in the role play and I can write the questions.

Additional benefits to the second-language learner was the use of online format to deliver the lecture and multiple online resources available to the students (Han, 2015; Lui & Jernigan, 2013).

Cognitive engagement revealed integration of course concepts and course concepts with other courses. Yet problems were also noted with application, second-language issues, and the day-to-day activities such as the question-and-answer session.

Comprehension. Data collected for the findings of comprehension included a content analysis of a midsemester exam's question responses and post student interviews with five students.

Content analysis. One test question was selected that addressed higher order thinking skills. Student responses were used from the flipped class and compared to student responses from the semester before. Responses were coded for depth of comprehension and degree of application to a case sample. While the non-flipped class demonstrated higher in-depth comprehension responses, 30% compared to 21%, the flipped class demonstrated a higher degree of in-depth and moderate application as compared to the non-flipped class or 42% compared to 20%. Additionally, the flipped class had overall more partial comprehension and application responses while the non-flipped class had more no comprehension responses.

Post student interviews. Finally, what did students have to say about their abilities to learn in a flipped class? Students talked about benefits of learning at their own pace, being able to watch the videos more than once, and the chunking of each video to no more than fifteen to twenty minutes in length. These benefits are consistently cited in the literature and benefits that specifically assist second-language learners (Fallows, 2013,

Feledichuck & Wong 2014; Han, 2015). Amna stated the shorter video lectures helped her to focus, and Bakhita talked about studying; as the translator explained,

It is beneficial for her to write her own notes in her own pace. In the classroom she has problem writing her notes because the teacher is faster than she can write.

So the video she can run it again and take notes.

Yet the same student also pointed out problems in keeping up with the pace of the videos.

While this appeared to be partially a problem of self-regulation, it was also a problem with simply keeping up with the amount of material.

Class activities that included small-group work, case samples, and role-play activities were also viewed positively by students. As stated by Cala, in traditional classes where they did not do role play, they did not understand. Students also talked about how applying what they were learning helped them to conceptualize how their learning could be used in social work practice.

Conclusion: Integration of Phase I and Phase II

This two-part action research study first examined obstacles to learning as identified by students and faculty within the cultural context of a UAE college and social work course. These identified obstacles were analyzed and compared, and the results were used to inform the implementation of a flipped class approach in Phase II of the study.

The first research question was, What are the obstacles to learning identified by native-Arabic, female English language learners? Students discussed obstacles in three broad areas of learning expectations and behaviors, language, and teaching strategies. For example, students voiced that their communication was often misunderstood. They also

described laborious translation issues. These communication issues were compounded by filtered interactions in which students, in this study, described hesitancy in questioning instructors. Additionally, students highlighted the importance of connecting to their learning material.

The second Phase I research question was, What are the obstacles to learning and teaching as noted by faculty who teach native-Arabic, female English language learners? Faculty discussed obstacles in the same broad areas of teaching expectations, language, and teaching strategies. Faculty pointed out differing expectations between their teaching expectations and student learning expectations such as perceptions of who was responsible for student learning. Additional obstacles included the expectations that some English language learning needed to be taught or emphasized in all courses, or as one instructor stated, “We are all English teachers even if we are not.” Also expressed were obstacles of student prior learning issues and difficulty with application.

A comparison of obstacles discussed by faculty and students underscored the need to contextualize teaching approaches. Indeed, the composite narrative statement of Phase I highlighted this need: Differing expectations between instructors and students of what teaching and learning should be intersects with a second-language learning environment in which students may have a background of limited prior learning in the second language. This results in consistent teaching and learning challenges which require additional scaffolding. Additional scaffolding was implemented as a modified flipped class approach which included orienting students for the flipped class and addressing concerns raised in Phase I. This orientation is supported by the literature which emphasizes the importance of preparing students for SCL and a flipped class (Burt, 2004;

Findlay-Thompson & Mombourquette, 2015; Holmes et al., 2015; Shukri, 2014). It is also a reminder that even the most innovative teaching approach can fail if not properly situated. Gaining an understanding of obstacles within the cultural context brought clarity to areas of needed attention, such as the provision of an orientation, alignment of activities outside and inside the class, as well as building cross-cultural relationships (Al Issa, 2005; Engin & Donanci, 2016b; Findlay-Thompson & Mombourquette, 2015). Essentially, part of the scaffolding needed to be a flexible bridge of communication, structure, and contextualization to increase the effectiveness of a flipped class. Suggested scaffolding strategies gathered in Phase I data were implemented in Phase II.

Phase II of this action research study considered how a flipped class could support engagement, comprehension, and learning in a second-language teaching environment. Findings indicated that non-Arabic-speaking faculty could indeed use a flipped class approach to support second-language learners when the cultural context was considered and culturally relevant strategies and materials were integrated in the flipped class (Goodwin, 2013; Shukri, 2014). This included openly addressing challenges unique to the cultural context, such as hesitancy to question the instructor as well as embedding first-language key words in the learning materials, and developing a flipped class structure that connected the online and in-class components (Al Issa, 2005; Engin & Donanci, 2014a). Additionally, the change in format from formal lecture to mostly groupwork and activities, appeared to positively affect student participation, interaction and questioning.

The second subquestion explored using a flipped classroom pedagogy to support comprehension and engagement of students. In the area of engagement, the flipped class did appear to encourage increased participation, attentiveness, and questioning during in-

class activities. Yet comprehension produced the most surprising findings. The content analysis of an exam question indicated that students performing at the lower end increased their comprehension and moved towards the middle, while more than 80% of the flipped class demonstrated some degree of application skills.

In conclusion, this action research study provided a possible method of how to contextualize a flipped class. By exploring research questions 1 and 2, I increased my understanding of differences in cultural expectations of learning and teaching, and improved my awareness of the influence of the social environment on teaching and learning. By using this knowledge, I was able to structure a more culturally relevant flipped class and answer research subquestions a and b. While this structuring had a positive impact, particularly in regard to students performing at the lower end, more questions remain as to which scaffolding components benefited students the most and why more students did not move beyond a middle-level performance. And while more culturally relevant scaffolding appeared to benefit student learning in this study, what kind of preparation and training could benefit faculty teaching in cross-cultural, second-language teaching environments?

The next chapter of this study will address the developing stage of action research as well as continued reflection on this action research process thus far. This action plan will explore how these findings could be integrated in studying future cycles of a flipped class (Mertler, 2014; Mok, 2014). Additionally, the process of reflection will continue through considerations of what aspects of this research should be more closely studied in future cycles as well as what revisions need to be considered (Mertler, 2014). This plan will include next steps and areas of suggested improvements.

CHAPTER 5

ACTION PLAN, REFLECTION, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

McNiff and Whitehead (2011) provide a description of action research as both open-ended and evolutionary. This description highlights the cyclical nature of action research, just as the research generated in this study now becomes the foundation and beginning of an action plan. The reflections on my research process and findings, to include identified strengths and needed improvements, become the basis for the next cycle of research or the next step in an evolving cycle that began with a problem of practice (McNiff & Whitehead, 2011; Mertler, 2014). So what was my problem of practice? It involved problems experienced by first-language Arabic speakers engaging with and comprehending an English-based curriculum. The purpose of my research was to understand culturally specific obstacles to learning and use this knowledge to implement a flipped classroom. Thus, my research questions focused on what were the obstacles to learning identified by native-Arabic, English language learners as well as obstacles identified by faculty who teach these students. Through exploring these research questions, I gained clarity regarding how problems were perceived and how students believed they learned best. This knowledge was used as a foundation to implement and contextualize a flipped class and answer the research subquestions: How could a flipped classroom support engagement and comprehension of second-language learners? And how could faculty use a flipped classroom to support learning? Through

the implementation of a culturally relevant flipped class and the collection and analysis of data of the flipped class process, I explored how a flipped class could be used to support second-language learners. I will now begin the next step in the process of the action research cycle: the development of an action plan.

Action Plan

Mills (as cited by Mertler, 2014) suggests that during the step of developing an action plan the action researcher should ask, “Based on what I have learned from this investigation, what should I do now?” (p. 211). Hence, the power of action research is in this question. The development of a plan that builds on improving and revising the previous action through systematic steps of planning, acting, developing, and reflecting (Mertler, 2014).

Initially, through the reflection on my research process and findings, I first considered my research questions, the two-phase research process, and the findings that answered my questions. Was I able to identify obstacles to learning and teaching? How could a flipped class support both second-language learners and faculty who are non-Arabic speakers? And did the knowledge gained from the findings of the first research question inform the development of a flipped class? I concluded that my findings supported future cycles of action research to explore how a flipped class could support student engagement and comprehension. Yet this exploration would need to include an ongoing investigation of the specific obstacles that impede comprehension and engagement, and this knowledge could again inform or modify the implementation of a flipped class. Thus, a new research question for the next future cycle of action research could be, “How can a flipped class pedagogy address expectations of and obstacles to

learning among native-Arabic, second-language learners in an undergraduate social work class?” I would continue to study the research subquestion a, “How can a flipped class pedagogy support comprehension and engagement among native-Arabic, female English language learners?”

Next, I will discuss my action plan and how the components of my plan could be studied to answer new questions in the cycle of action research. The components of the plan include an exploration of class culture, second-language scaffolding, and cultural and content relevancy of course materials. Through building on these components, I hope to improve and strengthen the process of contextualizing a flipped class.

Exploration of Class Culture

I began my action research through exploring the perceptions of students and faculty about how they viewed obstacles to learning in a UAE, second-language classroom. The purpose of understanding these obstacles was to use this information in shaping my flipped class approach. The findings of this research indicated that while second-language issues presented challenges to both students and faculty, so did issues of differing expectations. As noted by the translator, “Teaching expectations are shaped by cultural expectations” (Majeed, personal communication, August 14, 2017). Yet, as the student interviews indicated, so are learning expectations.

The purpose of the first step in this action plan is to implement strategies that provide an opportunity to explore learning expectations of *all* students in the next flipped Social Work with Families course, as well as explore my new research question, “How can a flipped class pedagogy address expectations of and obstacles to learning among native-Arabic, second-language learners?” To explore this question sufficiently, a

teaching strategy would need to be included that encourages a reciprocal exploration and sharing of cultural views and communication styles. While similar components to this present study would continue during the orientation week, such as electronic video explanations of a flipped class, student-centered learning, and student and instructor roles in a flipped class, I would add strategies in which differing cultural expectations could be explored and addressed. Al Issa (2005), for example, provides a strategy in which instructors and students “work together as cultural investigators and cultural informants” (p. 155). Through structured discussions and activities, the instructor and students explore expectations of teaching and learning and attempt to identify points of commonalities. Differences are also identified and explored, and common ground is identified (Al Issa, 2005).

These discussions and activities would take place during week 1, or the orientation week, and at various points during the semester. For example, during the orientation week, a cultural awareness activity could be implemented. Al Issa (2005), supported by Polleck and Shabdin (2013), suggests implementing an activity that assists students and the instructor get to know one another yet also builds cultural awareness. This could include asking students to write about what is hardest at college for them, what they do when they don’t understand the course material, or what has worked for them in the past (Polleck & Shabdin, 2013). Yet it could also include asking students to write about their values, traditions, families, or events or experiences that have shaped them to become the person they are (Al Issa, 2005). Al Issa (2005) adds that the instructor also answers the same questions, and after inviting class members to share their

responses, the instructor should do the same. Finally, building on this study, obstacles to learning and strategies to overcome these obstacles could be explored.

To study these strategies, data could again be collected through field notes, audio recordings and transcripts. Additionally, a short survey could be administered in week 7, the week prior to the midterm, to allow students to identify obstacles or expectations that have not been addressed and to gauge how well student learning expectations are being met.

Second-Language Scaffolding

Phase II of my research began with adding strategies identified by students and faculty to provide additional second-language support to students. While students indicated these strategies were effective, the second step in my action plan will be amending and in one case changing some of these strategies. The purpose of these amendments and changes is to improve language support for second-language learners, and continue to address the research subquestion of how a flipped class pedagogy can be used to increase comprehension and engagement among second-language learners. Strategies to amend would include embedded Arabic key words in the course materials, a question-and-answer revision session at the beginning of each class, and low-risk quizzes throughout the learning modules to reinforce concepts (Arnold-Garza, 2014; Engin & Donanci, 2014a). Strategies to add would be a summary session at the end of each class.

One of the most helpful strategies identified by students in the post-flipped-class interviews was the embedding of Arabic key words in course materials. This strategy is also highlighted in the literature as a way for students to understand not only the literal interpretation of the word but also the context in which it is used (Ge, 2015; Shukri,

2014). During the flipped class, I did note additional words that would be helpful to students to translate to Arabic and embed in the course materials. Thus, I would continue with this strategy yet build on it for the following semester. Quizzes would also be amended, as several do not sufficiently cover the outcomes of the specific learning modules (Kim et al., 2014).

The question-and-answer (Q and A) revision session, used throughout the semester and implemented at the beginning of each class session, was used as a strategy to assist students in making connections between online and in-class activities. It was also an additional support to help second-language learners review key concepts (Engin & Donanci, 2014a; Engin & Donanci, 2016b). Two problems were identified with this strategy during the flipped class implementation. Initially, the strategy did not provide enough structure. Asking students if they had questions regarding the online materials led to few or no questions. Adding additional structure drew out the question-and-answer sessions, and they became too long. Thus, a proposed sample strategy for the coming semester would be to limit the Q and A sessions to 15 minutes. I would nominate three to five students each session to provide a question from the material. I would use nomination to build on Choudhury's (2005) argument, that second-language learners need teacher questions to initiate communication, as a second-language learner may not have the necessary tools to begin the interaction. It would also be important during these sessions to link student questions to the main topics and concepts of the online learning lessons and class activities as a "priming function for learners" (Fisher & Frey, 2015, p. 2). Finally, ensuring a short summary is added at the end of each class, again to link and

integrate concepts and align online and in-class activities, would be added to the action plan (Kim et al., 2014).

These second-language supports could again be studied through the collection of field notes and audio transcripts, yet quantitative data could also be collected through low-risk, online quizzes to explore comprehension and specifically study comprehension of learners.

Cultural and Content Relevancy of Materials

The final step of my action plan will be to add culturally relevant teaching materials and the use more relevant teaching strategies to enhance the current family social work course. The purpose is to continue to work towards the implementation of a culturally relevant course. Continuing to emphasize culturally relevant case samples and activities would be accomplished through ongoing amending of the material based on consistent community engagement in which community knowledge is acquired and brought to the classroom (Egbert et al.,2015; Hair & O'Donoghue, 2009; Veeran, 2013).

Yet new efforts are proposed in this action plan to merge community and cultural knowledge with newer culturally appropriate intervention models. During the first cycle of the flipped classroom, traditional family counseling models were emphasized, such as the problem-solving approach, ecological approach, structural family counseling, and solution-focused and narrative therapies. All were deemed culturally appropriate. Newer models, such as positive parenting, would offer potential increased cultural relevancy, particularly as the UAE has embraced positive lifestyle and parenting initiatives (Ministry of Happiness, 2017). Thus, part of the action plan for this semester is to

incorporate positive parenting approaches in the learning materials as culturally relevant yet internationally accepted intervention models. These models incorporate both prevention and treatment of children with behavioral and emotional problems through teaching students how to support families through the promotion of healthy family behaviors (Proctor & Knight, 2016).

Adding additional culturally relevant material would specifically target engagement of learners and how a flipped class pedagogy could be used to increase engagement among second-language learners. In particular, audio transcripts of portions of the classes could provide data regarding engagement of learners.

Summary of Action Plan

This action plan describes ways I will revise and improve the flipped class approach for an undergraduate social work class. Table 5.1 below depicts my proposed action plan for the next stage in the cycle of my action research.

Table 5.1 Proposed Action Plan

Action: Change or Revise	Amend	Add	Timeline
Exploration of Class Culture		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Large- and small-group discussions that explore flipped class and SCL teaching and learning expectations ● Cultural awareness activity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Use during orientation week or first week ● Use throughout the semester

Second-
Language
Scaffolding

- Increase embedded Arabic words in course materials
- Change question-and-answer session to a shortened, more structured format.
- Strengthen low-risk quizzes to ensure adequate coverage of learning outcomes

- Summary after each lesson

- Create at beginning of the semester or prior to the start of the flipped class
- Implement throughout the semester

Cultural and
Content
Relevancy of
Materials

- Use ongoing community engagement to tweak and strengthen cultural relevancy of case samples and class activities

- New positive parenting intervention models

- Create materials at the beginning of the semester
- Implement throughout the semester

Reflection

This final reflection will include an overall reflection of the process of my action research and consider strengths and weaknesses of this process. This will be followed by a reflection on my findings to include what I learned, what issues or insights arise from my findings, and the integration of my research with existing literature. I will then reflect on the trustworthiness of my study. Finally, I will discuss my strategy for sharing my findings.

Reflection of the Action Research Process

This reflection will consider strengths and weaknesses of my research process. It will be organized according to Phase I and Phase II.

Phase I. Phase I addressed the research questions of what are the obstacles to learning as perceived by native-Arabic students learning in a second language. The second research question explored faculty perceptions of teaching and learning obstacles. The strengths of this part of the research process included the data collection methods. The faculty focus group provided a culturally sensitive method for gathering data and, as consistent with the literature, provided opportunities for an open and in-depth sharing of thoughts and experiences. While I did ask broad questions and use protocols based on an initial survey, the focus was kept on the interactions during the group (Thomas, 2008; Yin, 2016). Additionally, my previous training in conducting groups appeared to help me facilitate and guide the group to ensure all voices were heard without providing too much control over the group interactions. The interactions led to a deep exploration of the obstacles to teaching and learning, and the faculty participants appeared to embrace the opportunity to share their thoughts and feelings.

The semistructured student interviews also appeared to provide an avenue for an in-depth exploration of obstacles. Strengths of the interviews included the presence of a translator that allowed students to respond in Arabic or English (Findlay-Thompson & Mombourquette, 2015; Mertler, 2014). Students articulated their difficulties in ways that I had not considered. For example, Amna pointed out that she often understood very well what assessment questions were asking but the teacher understood her responses differently.

The qualitative, ethnographic approach used to analyze Phase I data helped me understand the differences in perceptions and expectations of faculty and students. Through the process of qualitative data analysis—disassembling the data, reassembling the data, memo writing, and constant comparison—I gained insights into my data, such as the differing expectations of faculty and students towards teaching and learning. Understanding these differences was key in providing a foundation for Phase II and the implementation of a more culturally relevant teaching strategy. The action research framework used to study the research questions provided a flexible framework for me to amend Phase II and build on the insights gained in Phase I.

Yet despite these successes, there were issues with Phase I and areas of the study I would develop and implement differently in the future. To begin with, I would increase my sample size. Specifically, I would include a second faculty focus group and a second set of semistructured student interviews. In regard to the focus group, because focus groups are particularly helpful in understanding beliefs, opinions, and contrasting experiences, a second focus group could provide a greater depth and range of experiences (Mishra, L., 2016). In regard to student interviews, because the class size was small, i.e., 14 students, if all students could have participated in the semistructured interviews, this would have provided additional depth and contrasting opinions.

Phase II. Phase II addressed research the subquestion of how a flipped class could be used to support student engagement and comprehension. A second research subquestion considered how a flipped class could be used by faculty to support learning. Reflection in this section will continue to consider strengths and weaknesses but will be

organized according to flipped class implementation as well as data collection and analysis.

Flipped class implementation. This section of my reflection will explore my successes and challenges in building cross-cultural teaching connections with students, English language support, and flipped class SCL.

Insights learned in Phase I helped me to develop a more relevant orientation that directly addressed student concerns. For example, in the flipped class orientation, I included discussion points in the videos, class discussions, and activities regarding issues raised in Phase I. This included such topics as asking questions, and class expectations. My hope was that students and I could open a dialogue of effective cross-cultural communication in which students were able to address questions and issues with me as the semester progressed (Al Issa, 2005). Additionally, this week-long orientation included an orientation to student-centered learning (SCL) and the flipped class. While students voiced concerns about asking questions and some confusion regarding the flipped class, a strength was that they did voice concerns and began to question. As the semester progressed, they asked more questions and discussions deepened, as highlighted in Chapter 4. This open dialogue extended into discussions regarding which family social work interventions were effective and culturally appropriate. In class, role play provided a natural forum for these discussions. Both the orientation and extended time for class activities appeared to strengthen cross-cultural communication during in-class activities.

Providing English language support was both successful and challenging. Successes in the online portion of the class included chunking the videos, or taking extraneous material out of the videos, embedding Arabic vocabulary, and providing low-

risk quizzes in each learning module (Arnold-Garza, 2014). These strategies helped to ease comprehension challenges of English-based materials as well as laborious translation challenges. Indeed, the online format was noted in the post student interviews as being more helpful than the in-class activities. Students also noted the benefit of being able to self-pace and listen to portions of the video over again if they did not understand something (Fallows, 2013; Han, 2015). From my perspective, these techniques also eased pressure on me. I could help the students to focus on developing skills through activities and practice without the pressure of teaching the knowledge portion, or the lecture, in the same session as the skills component. The class activities also helped students to practice their English language skills while simultaneously developing their family social work skills.

Yet there were significant challenges to implementing these strategies. These included both time needed to develop and implement the flipped class and additional language support as well as finding a balance between instructor-imposed structure and student autonomy. Holmes et al. (2015) emphasize the amount of time needed to develop a flipped classroom and suggest asking questions such as “How does the time involved in learning new technology compare to expected benefits of its use?” (p. 224). For the Social Work with Families course highlighted in this study, the benefits outweighed the time needed to develop the flipped course. Yet the development of the course, including creating the videos, the class activities, and developing a semibilingual format for the presentation of materials, all took extensive preparation and time.

An additional challenge was finding a balance between needed structure and student autonomy. At times, I did not provide enough structure and at other times I

provided too much. As noted, students who have histories of learning in environments that use mostly teacher-centered strategies may have problems adapting to SCL and strategies that emphasize autonomy; thus, additional structure should be provided (Joanne & Lateef, 2014; Sinouvassane & Nalini, 2016). This was evident in the first Q and A sessions in which students barely responded when I asked for questions. Yet when I provided an instructor-imposed structure to the Q and A, students readily participated. As the semester went on, I had problems finding balance with both the Q and A sessions and following up with students regarding whether they watched the videos and completed the quizzes. Sometimes I provided too much structure and moved towards teacher-centered strategies, yet other times I did not provide enough. This quest for finding balance was most evident when students struggled with difficult concepts or time management. Lee and Hannafin (2016) acknowledge that when instructors give up control of the role of the expert, students may have problems adapting to increased autonomy required with SCL strategies. They also point out that student autonomy is supported by providing structure, but they add that this structure can be conceptualized and delivered as scaffolding in which the support is temporary (Lee & Hannafin, 2016). The author's point is an area that I could improve on in the next cycle of implementing a flipped class. The plan to address this issue is outlined in my action plan.

As outlined in Chapter 4, the flipped class activities delivered during class appeared to increase student engagement. Activities included the use of case samples, small projects, and problem-based learning activities during the first four weeks of class. At week 6, role-play activities were introduced in which students would either practice skills based on an instructor-written role play or write the role play themselves and then

present them to the class. These activities were interactive and culturally relevant (see Appendix K). In regard to the latter point, case samples I wrote were based on an amalgam of community input garnered from field education visits. When students wrote their own role-play exercises, they also used experiences and learning they had acquired in their field education.

Finally, use of various group work formats, such as problem-based, cooperative, and collaborative learning, were used throughout the semester. Group work provided students with a connection to their collective cultural context (Filatova, 2015). Yet there were minor problems with groupwork. Because of the history of teacher-centered approaches in prior learning experiences, students required more specific directions, instructions, and structuring of the groups (Filatova, 2015). Perhaps due to the influence of the collective culture in encouraging caring for one another, maintaining the harmony of the group, and at times “covering for one another with some doing more work than others” (Filatova, 2015, p. 21), not all members were engaged, as noted in the findings.

A primary challenge was the area of instructor and student time management. While I was able to implement many student activities during the semester, I did not provide enough individual feedback to students regarding their progress in the class. This appeared to be due to activities, particularly role play, that extended to the end of the class. This also meant that an ending summary activity was not consistently provided.

The biggest challenge for students appeared to be managing time outside of class to complete the videos and quizzes. As noted in Chapter 4, students at times felt overwhelmed by their out-of-class responsibilities. Initially, I had planned and suggested to the students to use the Q and A session to watch the video if they were unable to watch

it before coming to class. This did not work because students were embarrassed to let others know they had not completed the online assignment. It may be that in future flipped classes the module quizzes will need to move from low risk to middle risk to encourage students to stay caught up on the course materials.

Data collection and analysis. Data was collected through a research journal, field notes, a one-time-a-week audio transcript of a portion of the class, content analysis of a midsemester exam question, and post-flipped-class student interviews. Implementation of the flipped class addressed the research subquestion b regarding how a flipped class could be used by faculty to support teaching and learning. The same three sets of data were used to address part of research subquestion a of how a flipped class could be used to support student engagement. These data sets included a research journal, field notes, and weekly audio transcripts of a portion of each class. These three sources of data complemented each other, perhaps because of how they were collected. The audio transcripts primarily covered the first 30 minutes of class, which included the Q and A session, dividing students into groups, and assisting them in beginning their group work. There was some overlap between the audios and the field notes, but the field notes also covered student involvement in activities and role-play activities or the class period not covered by the audio transcriptions. As outlined in Chapter 3, the research journal used specific questions to guide the collection of data. This included answering specific questions regarding the strengths and weaknesses of the day's activities, and questions that helped me to focus on the cultural context, such as what cultural strengths and barriers I observed that influenced student learning (Lamb, 2013; Lin & Schwartz, 2003).

As I analyzed the data, I noted that these three sources of data fit together to form a holistic picture of the activities of each class session.

In the content analysis, responses to a midsemester exam question were collected and compared to the same exam question responses from the previous semester. This data was collected to understand student comprehension in the flipped class and used to address the first research subquestion of how a flipped class could be used to support student comprehension and engagement. There were no issues in the collection of this data. The use of a detailed rubric that focused specifically on the Revised Bloom's taxonomy categories of examination, application, and manifest and latent responses was also helpful in analyzing the data.

Post student interviews were also used to address research subquestion a, or how students perceived their own engagement and comprehension in a flipped class. As in Phase I, four out of five of the same students were interviewed, again using a semistructured-question format. The translator was again present, which allowed students to respond in Arabic or English. The presence of the translator appeared to assist students in articulating their answers. Answers were multifaceted with students discussing both the strengths and challenges of working in a flipped class. Yet there were challenges with the translation.

Challenges to the data collection methods included translation challenges and time. These challenges mostly applied to the post student interviews. Collecting the data for research subquestion b and the engagement portion of research subquestion a was less of a challenge likely because the data collection methods were built into the flipped class plans, and time was allotted on the days the classes met to journal and/or transcribe the

field notes and audio recordings. With post student interviews, however, scheduling was again a problem. Due to class schedules and student transportation issues, student interviews were again combined. The translator again had to join via Zoom conferencing which led to some problems when the internet connection temporarily weakened. This problem was resolved, but the second set of interviews had to be halted then started again. Finally, as with Phase I, I did wonder about adding a survey. A survey would have provided greater breadth to the study, although it would be important to also include post student interviews to gain the depth of responses and add to the understanding of the unique perspectives and meanings students attributed to their flipped class learning (Thomas, 2008).

Data was analyzed using qualitative methods. Due to the amount of Phase II data, NVivo11 software was used to organize and manage the data. Even with the use of the software, analyzing the amount of data collected was one of the biggest challenges of Phase II. As noted by Yin (2016), the data was analyzed while data was still being collected. While this led to additional challenges, it helped me to identify gaps in the data. For example, follow-up questions were asked after transcribing Phase II post student interviews to seek clarification on student responses regarding time management issues.

Finally, this study was originally conceptualized as a mixed-method study. I changed the study to a qualitative study as an ethnographic approach could potentially increase understanding of how the culture and context of classroom and college might influence problems students and faculty experienced learning and teaching in their second-language environment. Additionally, how a flipped class approach might

influence this environment. A mixed-method study that included a survey to understand the perspectives of all students in the class, combined with the collection and analysis of data from the low-risk quizzes, could have provided another dimension to understanding the research subquestions of how a flipped class could support comprehension and engagement of students, and faculty who are not native Arabic speakers.

Findings: Insights, Issues, and Integration of This Study with Existing Literature

Insights revealed by this research began with increasing my understanding of the obstacles to learning experienced by second-language learners. What became apparent was that students in this study experienced not only obstacles related to second-language issues but also obstacles due to differing expectations between what faculty expected and what they expected of teaching and learning. These compounding obstacles interfered with student engagement and comprehension. Using this knowledge, I created what I hoped would be a contextually relevant flipped classroom. Findings indicated that the flipped class approach did appear to improve student engagement, particularly behavioral engagement. While not analyzed statistically, findings also revealed improved comprehension in the bottom half of the class and overall application strengths when responses of a midsemester exam question were compared to the responses from the semester before. Post student interviews, in particular, emphasized that students believed the online components such as shorter or chunked videos, embedded Arabic key words, and low risk quizzes, improved their learning.

Issues revealed by the study included problems students experienced completing the online activities. Particularly, watching the videos was highlighted as a problem as the semester progressed. According to the post-flipped-class student interviews, this was

due to other class assessments that interfered with the consistent online requirements of the flipped class. Yet some students also admitted it was easy to delay watching the videos when they knew they could watch the videos at any time.

In regard to the in class components, I experienced issues with providing a balanced amount of structure for some of activities; at times I provided too much and other times provided too little. I also did not provide enough individual feedback during the semester and focused too heavily on the activities, again indicating a problem with a reasonable balance of class structure. Next, I will consider how my findings are consistent with and add to existing literature.

Certainly, students and faculty in this study expressed obstacles relating to more than language issues. Students and instructors explicated differing expectations involving the type of student-teacher relationship, teaching approaches, and communications styles. These differing expectations are consistent with the literature, such as Burt (2004) as well as Shukri (2014), who contend that students coming from earlier educational experiences that mostly used teacher-centered approaches could have difficulty adapting to SCL. Additionally, Al Issa (2005), as supported by Polleck and Shabdin (2013), highlight the danger of intercultural conflicts due to differences in communication styles and expectations between students and instructors from different cultures. While Phase I findings were consistent with the literature, this study used Phase I insights to inform Phase II of the study.

Providing an orientation that addressed expectations of a flipped class and SCL was recommended in the literature by Findlay-Thompson and Mombourquette (2015) and supported by Holmes et al. (2015), and Engin and Donanci (2014). This study also

provided an orientation but built on the literature by addressing context specific obstacles identified by students and faculty in Phase I. Findings indicated that the first-week orientation helped students to understand the learning expectations and what they needed to do in the flipped class.

The use of chunked videos and quizzes, as recommended by Arnold-Garza (2014) and Strayer (2012), were also used in this study. Indeed, findings from the post student interviews indicated that these strategies received the most positive feedback. Consistent with the literature, students talked about the ability to replay the videos and a reduced translation burden due to embedded Arabic key words in the course materials (Fallows, 2013; Feledichuck & Wong, 2014; Han, 2015). The flipped class also appeared to have a positive influence on engagement, particularly behavioral engagement in the areas of participation where, similar to Sage and Sele (2015), students in this study demonstrated deeper and more meaningful class discussions. Additionally, questioning increased during the semester, which is supported by findings of Findlay-Thompson and Mombourquette (2015) who noted positive student feedback about opportunities to ask more questions in their flipped class. It is worth noting that the flipped class in this study, appeared to encourage more questions from students than a traditional lecture or teacher-centered approach. This might be due to the more informal atmosphere of the class as opposed to the more formal teacher-centered class environment.

Problems with time management and managing the online activities were noted by students and are consistent with Casim and Yong-Chil (2013), Sinouvassane and Nalini (2016), and Strayer (2012). Finally, in regard to comprehension, the flipped class did appear to have a positive effect on comprehension and application skills. While

Feledichuck and Wong (2014) also reported positive achievement gains, Bishop & Verleger (2013) note that not enough research has been done on linking flipped class achievement data to course learning outcomes. This point will be discussed further in future recommendations.

Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness and strategies to ensure trustworthiness were infused throughout this study. Credibility/Validation strategies of triangulation, peer debriefing, member checking, prolonged engagement in the field, and clarifying biases all provided strategies to ensure trustworthiness of the methods employed and accuracy of the research findings. Additionally, the generation of a rich, thick description allows readers to decide if they can transfer study findings to their own settings (Creswell & Poth, 2017; Yin, 2016). Reliability, or dependability, strategies were met through consistent practices of establishing a coding platform, multiple rounds of coding, the development and application of a codebook, and cross-checking of codes through the assistance of an intercoder rater.

Sharing Results

My plan for sharing the results of this action research study will begin with sharing the results locally (Mertler, 2014). I will present my research during a professional development (PD) session for members of my department. Additionally, this research has been shared with the Applied Research Committee at my present institution. I also will submit an abstract to a professional conference where I can share my findings with a larger audience.

Future Recommendations

Several recommendations can be drawn from this action research study. Firstly, my action plan suggests that to study future cycles of this action research, a mixed-method design might be best. This could include gathering quantitative data, such as achievement scores from course assessments, to better understand the effects of a flipped class on comprehension as well as continuing to gather qualitative data to study student engagement. Yet are there other study directions that might be recommended?

One such recommendation might be to conduct a study that focused solely on learner comprehension. While my study included comprehension data, it was not analyzed statistically. Certainly, as Bishop and Verleger (2013) point out, from the 24 flipped class studies they reviewed, only one studied student performance for a semester, and more research was needed regarding the influence of the flipped class approach on learning outcomes.

Possible research questions could explore student comprehension and performance over the course of a semester and consider what components of a flipped class instruction influenced student performance the most. Students in this research, for example, stated they thought the videos and quizzes benefited them the most. Additionally, findings of this study indicated that the bottom half of the class benefited more in regard to increased comprehension. A future study might explore what components of a flipped class could benefit students who traditionally scored in the middle range. Finally, a future study could run multiple flipped and traditional classes and compare the influence of teaching approaches on student performance.

Problems with self-pacing, and a perceived increased workload in a flipped class might be another study direction. These were problems for students in this study, but are also problems noted from flipped classes studies conducted with both students from Eastern and Western college settings (Bishop & Verleger, 2013; Casim & Yong-Childress, 2013; Findlay-Thompson & Mombourquette, 2015; Sinouvassane & Nalini, 2016).

Yet another research study direction could consider the issue of differing expectations between faculty and students from different cultures. Building on the Phase I findings of this study, a future research question might explore differing expectations of teaching and learning in second-language learning environments. This study could also encompass a larger sample size by adding several faculty focus groups and students from different semesters in a particular program. Students in different semesters, for example, might have varying perceptions of expectations of teaching and learning. This type of study might also consider support needed for faculty coming from different countries and cultures to enhance their cultural knowledge and awareness (Crabtree, 2010).

There are also questions of second-language learning and what teaching strategies are most beneficial. These questions appeared to be relevant to the students interviewed in this study, but again the sample was small. Using a mixed-method design, surveys could be used for breadth, while interviews could provide depth, clarification, and meaning (Thomas, 2008).

Conclusion

The problem of practice this action research considered was issues among native-Arabic, second-language learners with comprehension and engagement of an *English-*

based, undergraduate social work course. In order for students to master the course learning outcomes, students have to be able to engage, connect, and comprehend the course and course material. To better understand this problem, I first attempted to understand the obstacles to learning and teaching from the perspectives of students and faculty. Through collecting data from a faculty survey, focus group, and student interviews, I analyzed this data using an ethnographic, qualitative approach. This led to the following finding and narrative statement: Differing expectations between instructors and students of what teaching and learning should be intersects with a second-language learning environment in which students may have a background of limited prior learning in the second language. This results in consistent teaching and learning challenges that require additional scaffolding. This additional scaffolding was proposed and implemented as a flipped class approach. The flipped class approach was added and studied in Phase II of this action research.

During Phase II, I attempted to understand how a flipped class pedagogy could be used to support learning and teaching in a second-language learning environment. Through implementing suggestions made in Phase I, I attempted to contextualize the flipped class in a way that would best meet the learning needs of my students. Data was collected through a research journal, field notes, weekly audio transcripts of a portion of the class, post student interviews, and content analysis of responses to a midsemester exam question, and the data was analyzed using qualitative methods. Findings indicated increased engagement during class activities and increased comprehension and application among students who scored at the lower end of the class. And while specific components of a flipped class approach were deemed beneficial by students, such as

chunked videos they could watch more than once, the contextualized aspects of the flipped class, identified in Phase I of this study, were also deemed useful by the students. Examples included embedded Arabic key words in the course materials and culturally relevant class activities. Other strategies used to address concerns identified in Phase I included an orientation week in which differing expectations of students were addressed, particularly in regard to student expectations of learning and how those might differ from learning in a student-centered learning context. Thus, through the implementation of a two-phase study, this study evolved into more than studying the effects of a flipped class. It led to a deeper understanding of the learner and how this understanding could be used to contextualize an innovative teaching approach such as a flipped class.

Finally, my action plan outlines areas of continued and needed improvement, such as new methods to build cross-cultural relationships with students, improved English language supports, and the addition of culturally relevant material. While these improvements will be addressed in the next cycle of this action research, perhaps my most important observation and finding from this study was gaining an understanding of the unique contextual obstacles in my teaching and learning environment, and using that knowledge to build a more contextually relevant class.

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APPENDIX A

SEMISTRUCTURED STUDENT INTERVIEW PROTOCOLS

Date: Participants:	Phase I: Obstacles to Learning
Protocol/Question	Questions and Possible Follow-Up Questions
Perception of College Obstacles	1. What is the most common obstacle you face in your college studies?
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is a common obstacle that interferes with your studies? • What do you think is the most common reason for you not to perform well on your assessments?
Perception of Learning in a Second Language	2. What is most difficult for you about learning in a second language (English)?
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are advantages of learning in second language? • What do you think are disadvantages of learning in a second language?
Perception of Obstacles to Comprehension	3. What do you think is the most difficult obstacle you encounter in understanding course material?
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please provide an example.
Navigating Obstacles	4. When you do not understand the material, what do you do?
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please provide an example.
Perception of an Ideal Class	5. Please describe a class in which you learn best.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the instructor doing in this class to help you to learn? • What is happening in this class that is not happening in other classes? • What are you doing in this class that you are not doing in other classes?

Date: Participants:	Phase II: Post-Flipped Class
Protocol/Question	Questions and Possible Follow-Up Questions
Advantages	1. What are advantages of flipped classroom?
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do you think are advantages of watching videos outside of class? • What do you think are advantages of using class time to participate in activities? • What are your thoughts on being able to learn at your own pace? • Who do you view or think is most responsible for your learning in a traditional versus a flipped class? Which do you like better and why?
Disadvantages	2. What do you think are disadvantages of using flipped classroom?
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What difficulties did you experience using flipped classroom? • What disadvantages did you experience (if any) watching video lectures outside of class? • What disadvantages did you experience (if any) using class time for activities?
Personal Satisfaction	3. What do you like most about the video lectures? 4. What do you like most about using class time for activities?
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please provide an example of each
Personal Satisfaction	5. What do you like least about the video lectures? 6. What do you like least about using class time for activities?
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please provide an example of each
Perception of Learning	7. How well did you learn (master) the course material in the flipped classroom?
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please provide an example. • How do you think the activities affected your learning? Why? • How did the flipped class compare with your learning in a traditional class?
Improvements	8. If you took a class in the future that used flipped classroom approach what would you like to see changed?
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do you think should stay the same?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Could you provide a specific example of activities that you believe were not relevant?• Could you provide a specific example of activities that were relevant?• Could you talk about problems with the online content?
Ideal Class	9. Please describe a class in which you learn best.

APPENDIX B

FACUTLY SURVEY AND RESPONSES

Instructional Challenges and Second-Language Learners

SurveyMonkey

#1



COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Sunday, May 28, 2017 10:06:59 AM
Last Modified: Sunday, May 28, 2017 10:14:55 AM
Time Spent: 00:07:56
IP Address: 31.29.64.203

PAGE 1: Faculty Questionnaire

Q1: What are the most common instructional obstacles you encounter when teaching Native Arabic, Second-language English learners?

Many students seem to feel a tension that can get in the way of comprehension. I, as a teacher, do not speak Arabic, which I think would help greatly. I am attempting to learn it! The students seem to be able to "relax" when with an Arabic-speaking guest speaker in my classes, and I wish I could somehow tap into where some of that "relaxation" might be able to lead my students.

Q2: What obstacles do you believe students encounter in comprehending your lectures and/or materials?

Slowness in student comprehension of complex medical language. Some students seem to be intimidated by the language barrier and I feel badly for them but can't really do much to alleviate that intimidation. I teach medical coding, which is all about "integration" of the medical language, adapting the medical language to computer technology, determining numeric codes for diagnoses, procedures, and reimbursement grouper systems, so a student with basic comprehension difficulties can be completely overwhelmed from the "get go." Sometimes medical coding is thought of as a "dry" subject but it is really nothing of the sort as there is a real art and science to it. But is so hard to get students to relax and realize that for themselves. Also, we do not use encoding software in our program and the clumsiness of using the books also creates a drag on scarce time.

#2



COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Sunday, May 28, 2017 11:49:50 AM
Last Modified: Sunday, May 28, 2017 11:56:18 AM
Time Spent: 00:06:28
IP Address: 31.29.64.206

PAGE 1: Faculty Questionnaire

Q1: What are the most common instructional obstacles you encounter when teaching Native Arabic, Second-language English learners?

My speech can sometimes be too fast. I have to remember to slow it down and to break bigger tasks in to smaller parts.

Q2: What obstacles do you believe students encounter in comprehending your lectures and/or materials?

My lectures can be too Theory-driven. In a traditional lecture, you would provide the theory and after show the application. In this environment, it is often better to show the practical side of the theory. I try to strike a balance between the two. It's often difficult and I don't often get it right

#3

**COMPLETE**

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Sunday, May 28, 2017 1:00:11 PM
Last Modified: Sunday, May 28, 2017 1:05:22 PM
Time Spent: 00:05:11
IP Address: 31.29.64.208

PAGE 1: Faculty Questionnaire

Q1: What are the most common instructional obstacles you encounter when teaching Native Arabic, Second-language English learners?

They often translate sentences and words to Arabic and try to make sense of everything in Arabic and could hold a big challenge since word to word translation may change the topic entirely in some subjects other than math.

Q2: What obstacles do you believe students encounter in comprehending your lectures and/or materials?

Most lectures in addition to the English language also have Latin vocabulary and discipline related terminology which could be challenging for students to comprehend the lecture materials well. Given that they already struggle with English only.

#4

**COMPLETE**

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Monday, May 29, 2017 4:35:36 PM
Last Modified: Monday, May 29, 2017 4:41:24 PM
Time Spent: 00:05:47
IP Address: 31.29.64.205

PAGE 1: Faculty Questionnaire

Q1: What are the most common instructional obstacles you encounter when teaching Native Arabic, Second-language English learners?

Depends greatly on the section and whether male or female students but a general poor grasp of English with the male students.

Q2: What obstacles do you believe students encounter in comprehending your lectures and/or materials?

In general poor scientific and technical English skills.

APPENDIX C

FACULTY FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS

Student Obstacles Experienced in the Current Learning Environment	
Second Language	1. What specific language issues do students in your courses appear to struggle with the most?
Discipline Related Issues	2. What curriculum issues do you believe inhibit or keep your students from engaging/connecting and/or comprehending course materials?
Teaching Methods	3. What teaching methods, strategies or ways of delivering your course materials have you personally used or that your department uses that you think inhibits or has inhibited learning in the classroom?
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What are examples of methods that your or someone else used that worked for the students?
Prior Learning	4. How does a student's prior learning experiences impact her ability to connect to and comprehend coursework?
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Examples?• Teaching strategies that worked for you?

Instructor Experiences of Common Obstacles Teaching In Second Language Learning Environments	
Cultural Differences	1. What cultural obstacles have you experienced (teaching in a cross cultural learning environment) and what are some examples?
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is an example of a teaching technique (connected to culture) that you believe worked?
Translation Obstacles	2. What are some examples of language obstacles such as difficulties with student translation you may have encountered?
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is an example of a teaching technique that you believe increased student comprehension?
Behavioral Obstacles	3. What behavioral obstacles do you encounter that you believe interferes with student comprehension?
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are these behaviors related in any way to the second-language learning environment? • How do you cope with these behavioral challenges?
Environmental Obstacles	4. In regard to teaching Native-Arabic-L1 learners in an L2 environment, what environmental obstacles have you encountered?
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental obstacles to engagement? • Comprehension? • How have you met these challenges?
Strategies that Work	5. Strategies or Strengths you were able to work with or around these obstacles?
Anything Else?	6. Anything you would like to add?

APPENDIX D

STUDENT AND FACULTY CONSENT FORMS

Student Interview Consent Form

Research Project Title

“The Effects of Flipped Classroom on Comprehension and Perception among Second Language Learners in an Undergraduate Social Work Course”

Methodological Framework

Action Research

Name of Researcher

Beverly Wagner

Purpose

The purpose of this research is to gather information about obstacles to engagement and comprehension of Native-Arabic, English language learners as well as learning in a flipped class. Information from these interview will be specifically used to inform this research study regarding obstacles to teaching in second language learning environments, helpful pedagogical strategies and learning in a flipped class.

Procedures

Students who participate in a flipped class will be interviewed to understand obstacles to learning experienced by Emirati, female students. The interviews will be audio recorded and notes will be taken throughout the interviews. Your responses will remain confidential and your names will not be included on the final report.

Your participation is optional and you can choose to leave the interviews at any point.

Benefits and Risks

Benefits could include insights gained when exploring teaching strategies that work for you. No risks are anticipated.

Privacy

Your privacy and confidentiality will be protected. Beverly Wagner will analyze the data, but your responses will remain confidential, and your name will not be included or linked with any reports.

Approvals

This study was approved by the following bodies:

- IRB (Health Sciences South Carolina Institutional Review Board)
- HCT Applied Research Committee
- Health Sciences Division, HCT

Contact Information

Should you have questions regarding this research, contact information for the researcher is:

Beverly Wagner, Researcher
bwagner@hct.ac.ae
+971-055796-9284

Agreement

- I have read the above information and understand the aims of the project.
- I am aware of the topic to be discussed in the interviews.
- I am fully aware that I will remain anonymous, my confidentiality will be protected, and that I have the right to leave the interviews at any point.
- I am fully aware that data collected will be stored securely and safely.
- I am fully aware that I am not obliged to answer any question, but that I do so at my own free will.
- I agree to have my interviews audio recorded, so it can be transcribed following the interviews. I am aware that I have the right to edit the transcript once it is completed.

Printed Name

Participants Signature Date

Researchers Signature Date

Focus Group Consent Form

Research Project Title

“The Effects of Flipped Classroom on Student Engagement, Achievement and Perception among Second Language Learners in an Applied Social Work Course”

Methodological Framework

Action Research

Name of Researcher

Beverly Wagner

Purpose

The purpose of this focus group is to gather information about obstacles to engagement and comprehension among Native-Arabic, English language learners. Information from this focus group will be specifically used to inform this research study regarding obstacles to teaching in second language learning environments and helpful pedagogical approaches and strategies.

Procedures

As part of this study, a small faculty group will be used to understand obstacles to teaching Emirati, female students. This focus group will be audio recorded and notes will be taken throughout the session. Your responses will remain confidential and no names will be included on the final report.

Your participation is optional, and you can choose to leave the focus group at any point.

Benefits and Risks

Benefits could include learning about alternative viewpoints regarding teaching second-language learners. No risks are anticipated.

Confidentiality

You are asked to respect the privacy of other focus group members by not disclosing any content discussed. Beverly Wagner will analyze the data, and your responses will remain confidential, and no names will be included in any reports.

Approvals

This study was approved by the following bodies:

- IRB (Health Sciences South Carolina Institutional Review Board)
- HCT Applied Research Committee
- Health Sciences Division, HCT

Contact Information

Should you have questions or concerns regarding this research, my contact information is:

Beverly Wagner, Researcher
bwagner@hct.ac.ae
+971-055796-9284

Agreement

- I have read the above information and understand the aims of the project.
- I am aware of the topic to be discussed in the focus group.
- I am fully aware that I will remain anonymous, my confidentiality will be protected, and that I have the right to leave the focus group at any point.
- I am fully aware that data collected will be stored securely and safely.
- I am fully aware that I am not obliged to answer any question, but that I do so at my own free will.
- I agree to have the focus group audio recorded, so it can be transcribed after the focus group is held. I am aware that I have the right to edit the transcript of the Focus Group once it has been completed.

Printed Name

Participants Signature Date

Researchers Signature Date

APPENDIX E
FIELD NOTES FORM

Date Time Activity	Observations	Comments/Reflections

APPENDIX F

EDUCATOR REFLECTION JOURNAL QUESTIONS

Educator Reflection Journal Guiding Questions

1. What are my thoughts and feelings about today's flipped learning planning activities or in class activities?
2. What is working? (Lamb, 2013)
3. What is not working? (Lamb, 2013)
4. What are important points I learned from this or today's experiences? (Lamb, 2013)
5. What evidence do I have to justify comments made in answering questions 1–3? (Lamb, 2013)
6. What are issues possibly linked to culture in which I need to gain further clarity (Lin & Schwartz, 2003)?
7. What cultural strengths or opportunities do I observe?
8. How can I use this cultural knowledge for future implementations or cycles of flipped classroom?"

APPENDIX G

PEDAGOGICAL STRATEGIES TO ADDRESS OBSTACLES

Challenge	Category	Strategy	Source
Relationship with Instructor	Differing Expectations of Instructors and Students	Created 23 videos and move lectures online to Blackboard Learn Management System to provide increased, in-class time for individual feedback.	Faculty Focus Group Semistructured Interviews with Students Overmyer, 2014
		Personalized videos by using a webcam and screen capture.	Findlay-Thompson and Mombourquette, 2015; Holmes, Tracy, Painter, Oestreich, and Park, 2015
		Addressed concerns in course introduction videos and first week class discussions	
Responsibility for Learning	Differing Expectations of Instructors and Students	Provided a one week orientation to Flipped Class and student-centered learning through two video introductions and two in-class large and small group activities.	Faculty Focus Group Semistructured Interviews with Students Findlay-Thompson and Mombourquette, 2015; Holmes, Tracy, Painter, Oestreich, and Park, 2015
		Making expectations transparent regarding out-of-class responsibilities	

Instructor-Student Communication	Differing Expectations of Instructors and Students	Addressed specifically in a one week orientation to Flipped Class and student-centered learning through two video introductions and two in-class large and small group activities	Faculty Focus Group Al Issa, 2005 Semi-Structured Interviews with Students
Culturally relevant activities	Differing Expectations of Instructors and Students	Developed approximately 30 in-class group or family role play activities to provide opportunities for collaborative learning Addressed cultural relevancy of activities by working with a bilingual, Arabic instructor	Faculty Focus Group Al Issa, 2005 Semi-Structured Interviews with Students Student Interviews. Crabtree, 2008; Samier, 2015; Veeran, 2013
Limited English-Need for English Scaffolding	Second-Language Teaching and Learning Challenges	Together with the translator, embedded Key Arabic vocabulary in slides and videos Uploaded Recommended Arabic/English Dictionary in Blackboard Learn	Faculty Focus Group Semi-Structured Interviews with Students
Danger of concepts being minimally or partially covered or watered down and Discipline specific vocabulary	Second-Language Teaching and Learning Challenges	Imbedded Key Arabic Words Chunked or shorter videos to allow time for reflection Numerous in-class activities to provide opportunity for application	Faculty Focus Group Semi-Structured Interviews with Students Arnold-Garza, 2014 Arnold-Garza, 2014; Bergman &

		Developed 10 optional Quizzes to reinforce concepts	Sams, 2012; Overmyer, 2014
Translation challenges and extra time needed	Second-Language Teaching and Learning Challenges	Embedded Key Arabic Words Chunked or shorter videos to allow time for reflection	Faculty Focus Group Semi-Structured Interviews with Students Arnold-Garza, 2014
Moving students away from rote memorization to deeper understanding and application of concepts	Second-Language Teaching and Learning Challenges	Question-and-Answer sessions to connect concepts Numerous in-class activities to provide opportunity for application Developed 10 optional quizzes to reinforce concepts	Faculty Focus Group Engin & Donanci, 2014 Semi-Structured Interviews with Students. Arnold-Garza, 2014; Bergman & Sams, 2012; Overmyer, 2014
Lack of English vocabulary to articulate understanding	Second-Language Teaching and Learning Challenges	In-class activities to provide opportunity for application Group work and Role Plays to practice English language skills	Faculty Focus Group Semi-Structured Interviews with Students. Arnold-Garza, 2014; Bergman & Sams, 2012; Overmyer, 2014 Fallows, 2013; Mehring, 2016.

APPENDIX H

EXAMPLES OF EMBEDDED ARABIC KEY WORDS

KEY CONCEPTS ABOUT FAMILY SYSTEMS

6 central concepts:

- ◆ 1. A change in one family member affects all members.
- ◆ 2. The family as a whole is more than the sum of its parts-**synergy**.
- ◆ 3. Families try to balance change and stability.
- ◆ 4. Family members' behaviors are best explained by **circular causality** **Circular patterns** أنماط دائرية
- ◆ 5. A family is made up of **subsystems** من نظام النظام الفرعي belongs to larger social systems and
- ◆ 6. A family operates according to rules established by the family.



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Engagement متفاعل

- Family social work, like other types of social work, uses the social work process of engagement, assessment, intervention and evaluation/termination.
- Engagement متفاعل involves establishing a relationship between the social worker and all members of the family.
- Assessment involves identifying **repetitive** متكرر **patterns and issues** within the family that are connected to the problem as well as identifying issues related to family relationships.



APPENDIX I

CODEBOOK

Faculty Focus Group				
Codes	Theme	Definition	Example	Code Method and Code Type
Codes and Category: Differences in Student and Teaching Expectations	<p>Theme: Student Learning Expectations and behaviors can clash with Teaching Expectations and instruction.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subtheme 1: “You have to be careful how you say things” • Subtheme 2: “Students have to connect with you” before they will connect with the teaching • Subtheme 3: “Sense of 	<p>Subtheme 1: Reference to ways you have to watch what you say. Examples of how words have to be filtered and carefully planned.</p> <p>Subtheme 2: References how relationship building, or identification with the instructor is needed for learning in this cultural context.</p> <p>Subtheme 3-References examples of collective culture.</p> <p>Subtheme 4-References lack of understanding of</p>	<p>Subtheme 1: ““You have to be careful-your words can get so easily misconstrued.”</p> <p>Subtheme 2: -“In my country, you could lecture on a topic-you did not have to excuse yourself from the topic. I feel like one of my obstacles is they link you with the topic. They need to identify with you and understand you are not here in judgement of them. More important here that they identify positively with you.”</p> <p>Subtheme 3: “They feel obliged to help the weaker students. They are</p>	<p>InVivo, and Patterned Emergent</p>

	<p>collective support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subtheme 4: You teach we learn mindset.” 	<p>student centered learning approaches (SCL) and dependence on teacher centered approaches.</p>	<p>desperately trying to help each other.”</p> <p>Subtheme 4: “Students don’t identify with learning as their responsibility as with Student Centered Learning. Students have to understand what their responsibility is. I don’t think they know.”</p>	
<p>Codes and Category: Second Language Teaching</p>	<p>Theme: “We are all English Teachers even if we are not”</p>	<p>Theme definition: Codes should reference second language teaching challenges and helping students to comprehend learning.</p>	<p>“I may know the meaning or translation to the word. . . but when I get into an example-it requires another level of understanding before I bring the students to understand. First they have to understand the term, then they have to understand the example in the use of the term. . . I have to go into several levels to help students understand.”</p>	<p>InVivo and Patterned Emergent</p>
<p>Codes and Category: Prior Learning Issues</p>	<p>Theme 3: “Good at Rote Learning but do they actually understand?”</p>	<p>Definitions: These codes should reference ways past learning issues impact present learning, such as a</p>	<p>“They can do well with what they memorize but application is hard.”</p>	<p>InVivo and Patterned Emergent</p>

		dependence on rote learning.	“Students are good at terminology because they are good at rote learning but they don’t actually understand.”	
Codes and Category: Teaching strategies that work	Theme: “How they learn”	Definitions: These codes should reference instructor approaches deemed effective.	“I also give them as much feedback as possible in their assessment. When they have the feedback, they don’t challenge as much.”	InVivo and Patterned, Emergent
Phase I: Student Interviews				
Codes and Category: Communication Issues	Theme: English Language Communication Issues Subtheme 1: “Understands something different”- Subtheme 2: “Long time to translate” - Subtheme 3: Arabic-English language background	Definition: Overall theme references problems students may encounter when communicating in a second language. Subtheme 1: References communication problems with non-Arabic speakers and, communication problems specifically with teachers who are first language English Speakers.	Subtheme 1: (Spoken by the Translator) “11. I understand the questions but do not have English to communicate properly.” When I do communicate, the teacher understands something different than what I mean.” Subtheme 2: (Spoken by the Student) “Trying to translate terminology now-hard. Takes a long time to translate. . .It takes a long time to study in English. And, “the Google Translate	InVivo and Patterned Emergent

		<p>Subtheme 2: References problems in translating English to Arabic and Arabic to English.</p> <p>Subtheme 3: References problems with prior English learning or learning before college that was mostly monolingual</p>	<p>will not give me the correct answer. It will give me a different answer. So I have to add words.” (Word to word translation from English to Arabic does not always make sense).</p> <p>Subtheme 3: (Spoken by the Translator) “Grammar is the most difficult. She is weak in English.”</p>	
Codes and Category: Learning Behaviors	<p>Theme: Learning Behaviors and the Cultural Context</p> <p>Subtheme: Communication with Instructors</p>	<p>Theme: Overall theme references issues specific to the cultural context.</p> <p>Subtheme 1: References culturally specific ways of interacting with the instructor.</p>	<p>Subtheme 1: (Spoken by the Translator) “She asks friends instead of teacher or she tries to resolve problems herself. She does not want to interrupt the teacher.”</p> <p>(Spoken by the student) “It is not appropriate to criticize the teacher.”</p> <p>(Spoken by the Student) “Other students prevent you from talking to teachers.”</p>	InVivo and Patterned Emergent
Category and Codes: Instructional Strategies	<p>Theme: How I learn</p> <p>Subtheme 1: Strategies that Work</p>	<p>Definitions: Theme: How I learn: refers to instruction and students</p>	<p>Subtheme 1: (Spoken by Student without Translation)</p>	InVivo and Patterned Emergent

	<p>Subtheme 2: Strategies that do not work</p>	<p>perceptions of the instruction.</p> <p>Strategies that Work: Students perceptions of instruction that they believed were effective and helped them to learn.</p> <p>Strategies that do not work: Students perceptions of instruction that they believed were not effective and did not help them to learn.</p>	<p>“Real examples connect to our own lives. Examples stick in our minds,”</p> <p>“Feedback from the teacher is needed. Feedback helps to understand what we are doing right.”</p> <p>“More Arabic words and terminology embedded in course materials are needed.”</p> <p>“Activities helps to understand material by practicing skills.”</p> <p>Subtheme 2: “Case study from the web does not help-no connection to us,”</p> <p>“Long lectures are difficult-we feel bored.”</p>	
Phase II				

<p>Implementation</p>	<p>Implementation of a Flipped Class</p> <p>Subtheme 1: Successes Subtheme 2: Challenges</p>	<p>Implementation: Reference the instructor implementation of the flipped class.</p> <p>Subtheme 1 Successes: Flipped class implementation examples that were effective.</p> <p>Subtheme 2 Challenges: Flipped class implementation that presented challenges or issues were not resolved.</p>	<p>Subtheme 1 Successes: Creating two orientation videos that addressed some of the disconnect between faculty and students such as addressing issues with the instructor, understanding the instructor is not the topic, learner responsibilities and class expectations. I also provided a second video on learning in a flipped class and what students could expect.</p> <p>Overall, the creation of materials went well and I am ahead of schedule in regard to the creation of the materials.</p> <p>Subtheme 2 Challenges: “7. My prominent thought is that “things did not go as planned.” I had planned on showing the class the first video but due to all the monitors being removed from the classrooms, the</p>	<p>Holistic Descriptive, Patterned</p> <p>Emergent</p>
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			laptop would not sync with the smartboard. I have to remember to call IT on Monday.	
Category and Code: Behavioral Engagement	Engagement	<p>Definition: Theme-Engagement: Engagement could be described as a student's active and positive engagement in the learning process (Mandernach, 2015).</p> <p>Behavioral Engagement- observable behaviors that demonstrate the student is interacting with their learning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subtheme 1- Participation • Subtheme 2- Interaction and Questioning • Preparation and Organization 3 	<p>Behavioral Engagement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subtheme 1: Participation: 4 Discussion during large group was deep and reflective. • Subtheme 2: Interaction and Questioning: 120. They are also asking for feedback on their genograms which I need to do. • Subtheme 3: Preparation and Organization: 39. Still problems coming to class on-time. I do worry that this may be due to they have watched the video and therefore do not feel they need to come to the beginning of 	<p>Holistic Descriptive, Patterned</p> <p>A Priori</p>

			class.	
Category and Code: Affective Engagement	Engagement	<p>Definition: Theme-Engagement: Engagement could be described as a student's active and positive engagement in the learning process (Mandernach, 2015).</p> <p>Affective Engagement- expression of emotions the student has when engaging with their learning.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emotional responses related to course materials- Students are reacting emotionally to course content. • Emotional responses related to issues outside of the class-Students 	<p>Affective Engagement:</p> <p>Subtheme 1: 16. I. Shamma: "Miss I really liked the case you gave us for the genogram."</p> <p>Subtheme 2: 52. Interesting in the second activity they had problems thinking about how they might stereotype other families because of the pain they have experienced being stereotyped themselves. One member talked about wearing a hoodie in Europe and how much better people treated her than when she wore her shela.</p>	<p>Holistic Descriptive, Patterned</p> <p>A Priori</p>

		are reacting emotionally to issues not related to course content.		
Category and Code: Cognitive Engagement	Engagement	<p>Definition: Theme-Engagement: Engagement could be described as a student's active and positive engagement in the learning process (Mandernach, 2015).</p> <p>Cognitive Engagement- the mental energy and strategies used to make cognitive connections</p>	42 Class had some difficulty with the vocabulary in the Diversity and Family Activity but did not have problems understanding the questions.	<p>Holistic Descriptive, Patterned</p> <p>A Priori</p>
Category and Code: Comprehension	Comprehension	<p>Comprehension: understanding something in regard to the flipped course. It includes a process of thinking to seek meanings and solve problems (Luke, Woods, & Dooley; 2011).</p>	<p>Comprehension and Out of Class Activities: Referring to the videos. "2. When I hear it from the first time-I understand but when I hear the second and third time-it is so good."</p> <p>Comprehension and In-class Activities:</p>	<p>Holistic Descriptive, Patterned</p> <p>A Priori</p>

		<p>Comprehension and Out-of-Class activities: This references understanding of online or electronic materials for the flipped class. Could include comprehension of videos or online quizzes and how the on line materials assisted or detracted from comprehending the course learning outcomes.</p> <p>Comprehension and In-Class activities. This references comprehension of in class activities, when students are present in the classroom. Could include how the in class activities assisted or detracted from comprehending the course learning outcomes.</p>	<p>34. I like to have case sample and apply what we study. I like it because it helps me to see myself as a social worker and understand how to apply. It makes us aware.</p>	
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For Rubric and coding of mid-semester exam question, See Appendix XX.				
Category and Codes: Future Improvements	Improving the Flipped Class	Definition: References ways the flipped class could be improved in the future. These are suggestions that have not yet been implemented.	50. Translator: She said if you could add some questions in the power points beyond the quiz. 51. One of the challenges is sometimes she does not see the video and then you move onto the next video.	Holistic Descriptive, Patterned A Priori

APPENDIX J

CONTENT ANALYSIS RUBRIC

Question asked on Mid-semester exam: This question asked students to examine two family assessment tools and explain how they could apply the tools to a case sample, i.e., assessing the family in the sample.

Responses were coded in the following way:

- Did the response examine two assessment tools, (genogram, eco-map, family drawing, family timeline, family history) and did the student thoroughly inspect each tool providing, for example, a comparison and/or contrast of how aspects of each could assist the case sample family to understand their problems and strengths.
- Application to case sample. Did the student apply the assessment tools to the case, draw inferences and/or provide examples of how the tools could assist this family in understanding their problems and strengths?
- Was the information provided accurate, relevant and comprehensive?

Categories	In-Depth (21-25)	Moderate (16-20)	Partial (11-15)	Little to None (0-10)
Examines: Student is able to inspect differentiate and explain, providing facts/evidence to support statements.	Explains all aspects of the question and question concepts with exceptional detail, accurate subject knowledge, supporting facts and /or evidence. All relevant information necessary for full understanding of the complexity of question is provided.	Explains the question and concept(s) with detail and supporting facts and/or evidence. The response is missing no more than one area of explanation, facts or evidence or minor issues with relevancy and/or connections to concepts.	Explains the question, theory or concept(s) but answer lacks thorough explanation, inspection and/or supporting facts or evidence, or missing one component of the question either because it is not addressed or response is inaccurate. Answer could also be partially inaccurate or example is not relevant to the case or question asked.	Provides no explanation or does not answer the question correctly.

Application: Student is able to apply information to the case sample or through relevant examples	Applies concepts or theories through application to a case sample and relevant examples.	Applies concepts or theories but missing some minor areas of application or minor problems with relevancy.	Applies to case but missing more than one area of application or applies in a general, superficial or incorrect way. An example might be explaining how the tool is used but not applying to a specific family member.	Does not apply to case and/or provide examples.
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Spring 2017

Student	Examination	Application	Score and Scoring Comments
Student A	5 Did not address assessment.	5 Applied to case and to specific family members but mostly inaccurate.	10/20 Did not comprehend the question. Response was inaccurate and indicated a lack of comprehension in regard to the research question. Attempted application but inaccurate in how assessment tools could be applied to the family, thus was marked-no comprehension.
Student B	20 Explains the question and concept(s) with detail and supporting facts and/or evidence, but answer lacks depth. Additional examples would have strengthened the timeline examination.	15 Applied to the case in a general way for timeline. Limited specifics in genogram.	35/70 Moderate comprehension and partial application. Accurate and relevant response but lacked clear integration with case sample.
Student C	25 In depth investigation of the tools with supporting examples.	15 Some limited application to family with the genogram but not the eco-map	40/80 In depth comprehension and partial application. Examination was much stronger than application. Use of examples in the examination provided a clear, relevant answer that addressed all aspects of the tools. Application; however, was limited and student only briefly referred to the family when discussing the genogram.

Student D	10-addressed questioning techniques as opposed to assessment tools. Did examine questions and provided examples.	10 Applied to family-specifically the scapegoat but did not understand the question so could not correctly apply the tools.	20/40 Did not comprehend the question. Response indicated a lack of comprehension in regard to the question; however, the student provided examples and some application to the case sample, but did not apply the tools correctly.
Student E	25 thorough investigation in which the student attempted to answer how the tools could help families understand their patterns.	15 Application was general, not specific.	40/80 In depth comprehension but partial application. Examination provided in depth contrast between tools of assessment, application; however, was general and not specific to the case sample
Student F	15 correctly addressed one tool with supporting examples. Not all information was relevant; inaccurate in places	15 Applied to family in a general way	30/60 Partial Comprehension and Partial Application. Response investigated tools but one tool was inaccurate and information not relevant in places. Response did include examples but examples were not always relevant. Applied to family in a general way.
Student G	20 Explains the question and concept(s) with detail and supporting facts and/or evidence. Issues with relevancy in places. Much breadth but lacked consistent depth.	20 Application targets specific members but not in a way that specifically shows how tools could be used with them.	40/80 Moderate comprehension and moderate application. Answer has more breadth than depth, includes irrelevant information and is not coherent in places. The student does provide several examples of how tools could assist the family with strengths and weaknesses.
Student H	10 Did not answer the question correctly. Provided a breadth of answers but lacked specific examples.	10 Did not apply to the case.	10/10 No comprehension of the question. Some breadth but response was not correct and inaccurate, lacked examples and did not apply to the case.
Student I	20 Explains the question and concept(s) –provided detail but did not clearly differentiate between the tools.	15 Application was more general and better with genogram than with eco-map.	35/70 Moderate comprehension and partial application. Correct explanation but did not clearly differentiate between tools. Application provided effective examples to clarify how tools would be used but application to the case was more general.
Student J	25 provided strong appraisal of various aspects of assessment	22 Provided specific examples of application with Ahmed	47/94 In depth Comprehension and application to the specific family. In depth investigation with supporting

	tools with relevant examples.	family but did not apply to specific family members.	examples. Application to specific family members would have strengthened appraisal.
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Results: Spring 2017

Course	In-Depth Comprehension	Moderate Comprehension	Partial Comprehension	Little or No Comprehension
Spring 2017	30%	30%	10%	30%
	In Depth Application 10%	Moderate Application 10%	Partial Application 50%	No Comprehension 30%

Fall 2017

CATEGORY	21-25	16-20	11-15	0-10
Examine: student is able to inspect and appraise, providing facts/evidence to support statements.	Able to explain all aspects of the question and question concepts with exceptional detail, accurate subject knowledge, supporting facts and /or evidence. All relevant information necessary for full understanding of the complexity of question is provided.	Explains the question and concept(s) with detail and supporting facts and/or evidence. The response is missing no more than one area of explanation, facts or evidence or minor issues with relevancy and clear connections of response to the question asked.	Explains the question and question concepts but answer lacks thorough explanation, inspection and/or supporting facts or evidence or Missing one component of the question either because it is not addressed or response is inaccurate. Answer is partially inaccurate or example is not relevant to the case or question asked.	Provides limited description, answer is superficial or does not answer the question correctly.

Application: Student is able to apply information either to case sample or through relevant examples	Applies concepts or theories through application to the case sample and relevant examples.	Applies concepts but missing some minor areas of application or minor problems with relevancy	Applies to case but missing more than one area of application or applies in a general, superficial or incorrect way.	Does not apply to case or provide examples
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Fall 2017

Student	Examination	Application	Scoring and Scoring Comments
Amna	10 Did not answer the question correctly	10 Application did not demonstrate comprehension.	20/40 Student did not comprehend question. Addressed assessment outcomes instead of specific tools used in assessment. For this response to show improved examination and application, examination would need to specifically address assessment tools and provide relevant examples in application.
Bakhita	15 Explains the question and question concepts but answer lacks thorough explanation, inspection and/or supporting facts or evidence	15 applies in a superficial or incorrect way.	30/60 Partial Comprehension and Partial Application. While this student answered the question correctly, response did not investigate all aspects of the question. For example, how could the tools described help the family to better understand their problems and strengths? Application to case family was not specific, lacked relevant examples
Cala	15 Partial Explains the question and question concepts but answer lacks thorough explanation, inspection and/or supporting facts or evidence	15 Applies to case but missing more than one area of application	30/60 Partial Comprehension and Partial Depth. Did not investigate all aspects of assessment tools. Did Discuss how an eco-map could assist the family in identifying problem areas but did not address ways tools could help the family identify strengths. Application was more specific but student applied tools in a general way to the case sample and not specifically to a family member.

Dina	25 Thorough investigation of how various tools can be used to help the family understand strength and weaknesses. Tools were contrasted so the reader understood when a particular tool might be selected.	20 Applied to case with clear relevant examples but lacked specificity in places.	45/90 In depth comprehension and moderate application. Exceptional examination of the tools that contrasted tools and explained when each might be selected. Application had clear and relevant examples but lacked specific application to members of the family described in the case sample.
Eiman	15 Explains the question and question concepts but answer lacks thorough explanation, inspection and supporting facts or evidence	15 Applies to case but missing more than one area of application and applies in a general, superficial way	30/60 Partial Application and Partial comprehension. Response demonstrated understanding of the tools of assessment but lacked a thorough investigation of how the tools could assist families in understanding their strengths and problems. Application was done in a general way although student did provide examples of how a family drawing could be used with children.
Fatima	10 Did not correctly comprehend the question	10 applied to specific family members but problems with relevancy due to issues understanding the question.	30/60 student did not comprehend question. She provided multiple examples of interventions as opposed to assessment tools. Specific application to individual family members but issues of relevancy related to incorrect response.
Ghalia	20 Moderate examination that includes SW preparation prior to using the tools. Addresses how the	20 specific application to family members.	40/80 Moderate Comprehension and Moderate Application. Examination had good supporting evidence and depth in places but lacked thoroughness in explaining the tools themselves and instead focused on outcomes of using the tools. Application was specific and targeted to family members.

	tools can help family understand strengths and weaknesses but lacks clear descriptions of the tools		
Halima	20 Able to explain both tools. Unclear in places in eco-map section.	15 In between. Not specific and did not apply to specific family members.	35/70 Moderate depth and partial application In both examples, attempted to explain how both tools can help families understand their problems and strengths. Application was not specific in places but some examples were relevant.
Ilham	15 Investigation was thorough for one half of the question and the student provided specific example of how tools could help families identify strengths and weaknesses. Half of the question was not answer correctly.	20 applied to family but did answer did not target specific family members.	35/70 Partial comprehension and moderate application. This response had partial depth in which the student attempted to justify her response with examples. Part of her response did not specifically address the question. She applied one tool to the family and did specifically address how she would use this tool (genogram) with the family.
Jamilia	21 Explains the question and concept(s) with detail and supporting facts and/or evidence. The response is missing no more than one area of	22 Applies concepts or theories but missing some minor areas of application or minor problems with relevancy	43/86 In-depth Comprehension and In Depth Application. -Excellent application for the first tool-second however was more limited. Investigation had some minor omissions, but answer reflected an in depth understanding in which the student applied one tool to assessing internal dynamic and one tool assessing external dynamics. Applied the second tool directly to the family.

	explanation, facts or evidence		
Khadija	20 Explains the question and concept(s) with detail and supporting facts and/or evidence. Issues with relevancy in places and some minor inaccuracies.	15 Application was general/superficial	35/70 Moderate Comprehension and Partial Application. Answer had moderate depth in places. Application was general and not specific. She was able to correctly explain how she would use an eco-map for example, but did not apply it to a family member.
Laila	20 Explains the question and concept(s) with detail and supporting facts and/or evidence. Issues with relevancy in places and some minor inaccuracies.	20 Applies concepts or theories but missing some minor areas of application or minor problems with relevancy. Questioning was done thoroughly.	40/80 Moderate Comprehension and Moderate Application. Relevancy was an issue in places some minor inaccuracies in places as well in regard to the use of the tools although did correctly identify them. Student applied the tool with some degree of depth.
Maha	25 Able to explain all aspects of the question and question concepts with exceptional detail, accurate subject knowledge, supporting facts and /or evidence. All relevant information necessary for full understanding of	22 Strong application with timeline but not genogram	47/94 In depth Comprehension and Application. Detailed answer with clear evidence. Thorough investigation of the tools, good supporting relevant detail. Application was uneven. Overall thorough application, more specific for timeline that genogram. Applied directly to family members.

	the complexity of question is provided.		
Nasra	15 Explains the question, theory or concept(s) but answer lacks thorough explanation, inspection and/or supporting facts or evidence	15 Application was general and not specific	30/60 Partial Depth and Partial Application. Answer did not provide sufficient depth and lacked detail. Application while did apply the tools did so in a limited way. Specifically, the answer talked about how a genogram could help the family identify the problem source but did not explain how.

Course	In-Depth Comprehension	Moderate Comprehension	Partial Comprehension	Little or No Comprehension
Fall, 2017	21%	28%	36%	14%
	In Depth Application 14%	Moderate Application 28%	Partial Application 43%	No Comprehension 14%

APPENDIX K:

SUMMARY TABLE OF ONLINE AND CLASS ACTIVITIES

Date	Learning Outcome	Online Activities Prior to Class	In Class Activities 1	In Class Activities 2
August 21	1	Orientation Video 1: Learner and Teaching Expectations	Class Discussion Regarding the Video	Preparation Activity for Collaborative Learning
August 23	1	Orientation Video 2: What is a Flipped Classroom Video 3: Systems Theory Review Introduction Quiz 1	Class Discussion Regarding the Video	Case sample and questions to be completed in small groups. Large Group discussion
August 28	1	Video: What is family Social work: Mission, Goals and Focus, Theories	Small Group Case sample activity. Apply one family social work theory to the sample.	Small Group case sample activity. Apply one family social work theory to the sample.
August 30	1	Video: Family Social work Primary Interventions and Family as a natural group outside of class Learning Module 1 Quiz	Families, Social Functioning and Diversity small group activity. Large group discussion.	Problem Based Activity. Families and Parenting Challenges. Small and Large Group.
September 4	1	Video: Defining Family, Family Diversity and Structure	Cultural Activity-Family cultural communication patterns, child rearing and beliefs, activity. Small and Large group. E text will be needed.	Individual and small group vocabulary activity.
September 6	1	Video: Family Purpose and Problems. Video: How to complete a Genogram Learning Module 2 Quiz	Case sample and role play activity. Small and large groups.	Small and large groups. UAE family culture activity.
September 11	2, 3	Video: Family Systems Basic Concepts	Case sample activity. Identify patterns in the sample. Small group activity, role play and large group discussion.	Small group activity: write two goal and intervention statements based on the case.
September 13	2, 3	Video: Family Homeostasis, Circular Causality, Subsystems and Triangles	Small group activity and large group discussion. Family crisis and stability activity.	Small group activity and large group discussion

				positive change and family stability activity. Genogram and Reflection due September 17
September 18	2, 3	Video: Family Boundaries, Roles and Rules Learning Module 3 Quiz	Small group and large group role play. Write a role play that demonstrates family boundaries, roles and rules. Demonstrate for the class.	Small group and large group role play. Write a role play that demonstrates family boundaries, roles and rules. Demonstrate for the class.
September 20	2, 3	Video: Engaging with Families, Beginning Questions, Interactions and Potential Problems	Small group and large group role play. Write a case sample to present to the class on engaging with a family. Include beginning questions and other basic principles of engagement. Hand-outs used to provide guided questions for the class audience.	Small group and large group role play. Write a case sample to present to the class on engaging with a family. Include beginning questions and other basic principles of engagement. Hand-outs used to provide guided questions for the class audience.
September 25	2, 3	Video: Abuse in Families and Contracting	Small group case sample activity and large group discussion. Using the case sample, develop a contract for the family.	Small and large group. Develop a role play in which contracting is demonstrated. Demonstrate for the class.
September 27	2, 3	Video: Skills of Engagement Learning Module 4 Quiz	Small group and large group discussion. Prepare a list of common social work boundaries used during engagement.	Small group role play and large group demonstration. Act out Informed consent and establishing boundaries with a family.
October 2	2, 3	Video: Family Assessment Summary	Small group activity. Identifying family patterns during assessment.	Small group case sample activity and large group discussion.
October 4	2, 3	Video: Family Assessment and Question Types.	Small group activity and large group discussion. Write a case sample in which the social worker meets with a family. Include all engagement guidelines as well as circular and lineal questions.	Small group activity and large group discussion. Demonstrate additional case samples as time allows. Use hand-outs to provide guided questions for the class.
October 9	2, 3	Video: Types of Family Assessments	Small group activity and large group discussion. Pick one of the	Small group activity and large group discussion. Pick

		Learning Module 5 Quiz	assessment types and use it in a role play. Use hand-outs to provide guided questions for the class.	one of the assessment types and use it in a role play.
October 11	1,2,3	Video: Revision for Mid-semester exam	Small group activity-generating study guide for mid-semester exam.	Present study guide questions to the class.
October 16	1,2,3	Mid-semester Exam	Mid-semester Exam	Mid-semester Exam
October 18	2,3	Video: Introduction to Basic Family Interventions	Small group and large group demonstration and activity. Practice and present role plays. Identify family strengths and intervene in circular patterns. Hand-outs will provide guided questions for audience to answer.	Small group and large group demonstration and activity. Practice and present role plays. Identify family strengths and intervene in circular patterns. Hand-outs will provide guided questions for audience to answer.
October 23	2,3	Video: Detriangulation and other Basic Interventions Learning Module 6 Quiz	Small group and large group demonstration and activity. Write and present a role play that includes family triangle and social worker detriangulation intervention. Hand-outs will provide guided questions for audience to answer.	Small group and large group demonstration and activity. Write and present a role play that includes family triangle and social worker detriangulation intervention. Hand-outs will provide guided questions for audience to answer.
October 25	2,3	Video: Generalist Models of Intervention	Small group and large group demonstration and activity. Pick one generalist model and implement with a role play family. Present to the class. Hand-outs will provide guided questions for audience to answer.	Small group and large group demonstration and activity. Pick one generalist model and implement with a role play family. Present to the class. Hand-outs will provide guided questions for audience to answer.
October 30	2,3	Video: Specialized Models of Family Counseling	Small group and large group demonstration and activity. Pick one specialized model and	Small group and large group demonstration and activity. Pick one specialized model

		Learning Module 7 Quiz	implement with a role play family. Present to the class. Hand-outs will provide guided questions for audience to answer.	and implement with a role play family. Present to the class. Hand-outs will provide guided questions for audience to answer.
November 1	2,3	Video: Behavioral Techniques with Children	Small group case sample activity. Design a behavioral intervention plan for this family. Large group discussion.	Small group and large group demonstrations. Complete role plays in which a behavioral intervention plan will be designed and included in a family contract.
November 6	2,3	Video: Partner Communication and Interventions Learning Module 8 Quiz	Small group and large group demonstration and activity. Communication techniques with couples and partners.	Begin practical assessment preparation. Divide into groups.
November 8	2,3	Video: Termination of Family Social Work: Potential Problems	Small group and large group demonstration. Role play of termination and termination problems. Hand-outs will be provided with guided questions.	Small group and large group demonstration. Role play of termination and termination problems. Hand-outs will be provided with guided questions.
November 13	2,3	Video: Steps and Techniques of Termination Learning Module 9 Quiz	Small group and large group demonstration. Demonstrate a role play that acts out the steps and interventions of termination. Include how a social worker would evaluate her interventions with the family. Hand-outs will provide guided questions.	Small group and large group demonstration. Demonstrate a role play that acts out the steps and interventions of termination. Include how a social worker would evaluate her interventions with the family. Hand-outs will provide guided questions.
November 15	1,2,3	Practical Assessment Demonstrations	Practical Assessment Demonstrations	Practical Assessment Demonstrations
November 20	1,2,3	Practical Assessment Demonstrations	Practical Assessment Demonstrations	Practical Assessment Demonstrations

				Instructions on final research paper
November 22	4	Video: Introduction to Family Status Law	Apply the law to an instructor provided case sample.	Individual Research
November 27	4	Video: Family Status Law-Arabic Video	Small group and large group discussion. Write a case sample in which the social worker provides education regarding Family Status Law. Present to the class.	Individual Research
November 29	4	Individual Research-work on research paper	Individual Research-work on research paper	Individual Research-work on research paper
December 4	1,2,3,4	Video: Revision for final exam	Work in groups on revision questions. Present answers to the class.	Work in groups on revision questions. Present answers to the class. Research Paper Due
December 6	1,2,3,4		Work in groups on revision questions. Present answers to the class.	Work in groups on revision questions. Present answers to the class.
December 12-17	1,2,3,4	Final Exams	Final Exams	Final Exams

APPENDIX L:
IRB APPROVAL



OFFICE OF RESEARCH COMPLIANCE

**INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD FOR HUMAN RESEARCH
DECLARATION of NOT RESEARCH**

This is to certify that research proposal: **Pro00061892**

Entitled: *The Effects of Flipped Classroom on Student Comprehension and Perception among Second Language Learners in a Bachelor of Social Work Course*

Submitted by:

Principal Investigator: Beverly Wagner
College of Education
Department of Instruction & Teacher Education / Curriculum Studies
Wardlaw
Columbia, SC 29208

was reviewed on **1/17/2017** by the Office of Research Compliance, an administrative office that supports the University of South Carolina Institutional Review Board (USC IRB), and has determined that the referenced research study is not subject to the Protection of Human Subject Regulations in accordance with 45 CFR 46 et. seq.

No further oversight by the USC IRB is required; however, the investigator should inform the Office of Research Compliance prior to making any substantive changes in the research methods, as this may alter the status of the project.

If you have questions, contact Arlene McWhorter at arlenem@sc.edu or (803) 777-7095.

Sincerely,

Lisa M. Johnson
IRB Manager

APPENDIX M:

RESEARCH SETTING APPROVAL FORM



April 05, 2016

From: Dr. Matthew A. Robby, UNESCO Chair
HCT Applied Research Ethics Panel
matt.robby@hct.ac.ae

To: Beverly Wagner, Faculty of Social Work
Health Sciences Division
Abu Dhabi Women's College

HCT Ethical Clearance/Project Approval

The University of South Carolina dissertation proposal "The Effects of Flipped Classroom on Student Achievement and Perception among Second Language Learners in an Applied Social Work Course" has been evaluated by the HCT Applied Research Ethics Panel per the Standards for Protection of Human Subjects and HCT policies.

We hereby find that your research project, design, and procedures comply with required ethical standards and HCT policies. The project contains no risk beyond minimal.

We are pleased to inform you that your research project has therefore received full ethical clearance and it is approved. Your project can proceed in the HCT based on the protocol described. A copy of this letter will be kept on file and the project monitored consistent with HCT policies.

Congratulations regarding receiving ethical clearance on your project. We wish you the best of luck with this research! Please feel free to contact us if you need any assistance.

Thanks and best regards,



Chair – HCT Applied Research Ethics Panel



Dr. Matthew A. Robby

UNESCO Chair in Applied Research in Education
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CC: Dr. Yahya Al Ansari, College Director
Chair -- Applied Research Committee



BeverlyWagnerApprovalLetter.pdf

APPENDIX N

DIVISION APPROVAL FORM



Abu Dhabi Women's College

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

This letter is to verify I am aware and approve of Beverly Wagner's dissertation proposal and action research study: "The Effects of Flipped Classroom on Student Achievement and Perception among Second Language Learners in an Applied Social Work Course." This study has been evaluated by the HCT Applied Research Ethics Panel per the Standards for Protection of Human Subjects and HCT policies and has been approved.

Sincerely,

Hakem Al-Nasser
Program Chair – Health Sciences
Higher Colleges of Technology
Abu Dhabi Women's College
Email : hnasser@hct.ac.ae