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Flipping the perspective: exploring flipped learning through the student lens

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Flipped learning as a pedagogical approach is certainly no longer new. Reflecting a global trend, the idea of inverting the conventional notion of classroom-based learning has been adopted widely across West Australian universities. The idea to maximise class time to encourage deeper cognitive thinking via peer interaction and the role of the teacher as facilitator, rather than instructor, dates back more than two decades (see e.g. King, 1993; Mazur, 1997); however, the Higher Education Academy (now Advance HE) argues that “flipped learning has [still] not been rigorously evaluated as a pedagogy in higher education” (Higher Education Academy, 2017). Furthermore, although flipped learning is widely envisaged as the education model of the future, scholarly insights to date have largely focussed on the understanding of ‘reverse teaching’ in terms of its application and impacts on grades, rather than exploring the student perception of the flipped experience.

Based on 18 focus groups, across five units, this study recognises the importance of the student voice and explores marketing students’ experience with and reflections on the flipped classroom. Findings indicate that instructor interpretations of flipped pedagogy vary widely, which impacts on learners’ perceptions of expectations, their motivation and ultimately the quality of the classroom experience. First-hand insights furthermore indicate that whilst the flipped model may suit some learners, it disadvantages – or at least unjustly challenges – others, who lament the reduction in structured, face to face contact.

Recognising that in particular due to the emergence of new digital tools and platforms flipped teaching has increasingly become the status quo, this study sets out to inform future flipped approaches and hence guide educators’ vision of a more engaged student cohort and deeper learning experience.

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