

Student Perceptions of the Flipped Classroom: An Evaluation of Hybrid Pedagogy in the Marketing Classroom

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The hybrid, or flipped, classroom is a pedagogical alternative aimed to increase student engagement and subsequent educational outcomes. A qualitative study involving marketing students who had significant involvement with the flipped classroom setting finds students are accepting of the pedagogy, demonstrate limited anxiety with its implementation, appreciate the inherent flexibility offered by the format, find classroom engagement to be enhanced, and value the use of e-books which are commonly incorporated with the teaching method. However, student opinions regarding the level of learning that takes in the flipped classroom do not closely align with other student insights.

Keywords: flipped classroom, hybrid technology, student engagement, student anxiety, course flexibility and course convenience, COVID-19

INTRODUCTION

The advent of distance enabling technology has brought with it a host of educational options that offer a variety of teacher and student opportunities. Unfortunately, implementation of these options provides varying degrees of success. We in higher education must therefore focus our attention not simply upon more technologically driven pedagogy, but on pedagogy that results in better student outcomes (Kuh, 2003).

Today, the educator must accept the premise that traditional pedagogies, including the mass lecture and in-class, face-to-face discussion, are no longer appropriate for all learning situations (Aiken, et al., 2017). An alternative is the flipped classroom, which takes advantage of today's technology and students' willingness to make use of it as it reverses the position of the teacher and the student. Teachers in many cases take on more of an auxiliary role in the teaching process as they guide their students through the learning process. With the flipped classroom the teacher can better integrate a host of readily available online resources, more efficiently use the limited class time period, and provide the student with a more dominant role. By utilizing the ever-expanding educational technology becoming available, the flipped classroom may enhance students' comfort with course material and develop the personal responsibility commonly associated with successful online learning programs (Wan, 2019).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Student Perceptions of the Flipped Classroom

A key to any successful educational initiative is an understanding of how students will perceive and react to not only the technology employed, but the entire program's pedagogy (Koochang & Durante, 2003; Park, 2009). Research is subsequently required to better understand student attitudes, intentions, and what influences their beliefs surrounding the technology and the pedagogy employed (Grandon, et al., 2005; Park, 2009). Overall student satisfaction, or the learner's perception of the value of their educational experience in an educational setting, is an important issue and must be considered in course and program effectiveness (Astin, 1993; Bolliger & Halupa, 2012).

The following qualitative study garners student input regarding a wide variety of issues associated with online education and particularly, the flipped classroom. With it, marketing educators will be better prepared to decide if the flipped classroom offers the best pedagogical option for their particular class, and determine how the pedagogy may best be implemented.

It is imperative to garner a better understanding of not only "what works" but also "what doesn't work" with regard to student satisfaction and technology enabled pedagogy such as the flipped classroom. So, while there are inherent advantages associated with internet-enabled education such as reaching new students, generating new revenues, increasing convenience, and possibly enriching educational experiences (Hara & Kling, 2001), many students have become quite comfortable with, and accustomed to, traditional, passive, teaching modes and the strong teacher dependence that such teaching environments employ (Muilenburg & Berge, 2003; Wan, 2019). Drawbacks associated with internet enabled education such as a limited or lack of face-to-face social interaction, anxiety dealing with limited technical skills and limited access to learning resources, and limited technology support, call all result in unsatisfied students (Bolliger & Halupa, 2012).

Literature tends to minimize the issues typically associated with providing high-quality distance education enabled by technology, and instead focusses on the virtues of such pedagogy (Hara & Kling, 2001). Many argue that mobile communication technology can have a serious negative influence on interpersonal relationships (Przybylski & Weinstein, 2012; Turkle, 2011), which are important to not only the educational environment in general, but the marketing curriculum particularly.

Online educational programs have been known to fail because of the high cost of technology, poor administrative and educational decisions, strong (and growing) competition, and unsound business strategies (Elloumi, 2004; Park, 2009). Simply offering courses and attempting to replicate classroom experiences online may not meet student aspirations and may produce unexpected failure (Kilmurray, 2003; Park, 2009). Students in many cases have a strong interest in the subject matter, but little interest in the pedagogy in which the course is being delivered. As a result we see student anxiety, inhibited learning, and conceivably a lessening of brand relevance with the educational institution.

Student Anxiety

Arguably the greatest concern the academy must address when implementing flipped classroom pedagogy involves the anxiety associated with the course and the technology needed for its implementation. It has been found that anxiety, when associated with technology, can have a negative impact upon both student performance and satisfaction (Bolliger & Halupa, 2012; Sun, et al., 2008;). Anxiety has been defined as a "conscious fearful emotional state", while computer-related anxiety is more someone being "uneasy, apprehensive, or fearful" about using computers (Bolliger & Halupa, 2012; Igbaria & Parasuraman, 1989, p. 375;). The flipped classroom offers the opportunity for both. The anxiety associated with high technology courses is known to be quite high among college students (Bolliger & Halupa, 2012; Rosen & Weil, 1995; Saadé & Kira, 2007;), and these negative emotions can obviously impact a student's overall learning experience. Significant research surrounding anxiety and its impact upon student learning found frustration, confusion, anger, anxiety, and other similar emotional states can impact learning. We have also learned that those with high levels of computer anxiety are disadvantaged when compared to those with lower levels of anxiety (Bolliger & Halupa, 2012; Saadé & Kira, 2007).

Kay (2008), when investigating the relationship between emotions and the acquisition of computer knowledge, learned that there is an inverse relationship between anger and anxiety and computer knowledge gain (Bolliger & Halupa, 2012). Identifying, quantifying, and subsequently reducing or even eliminating course related anxiety is therefore an essential element in pedagogical evaluation.

Engagement

A common objective of college teachers is to get their students fully engaged in their classes operating under the assumption that a fully engaged class is learning the material better than a class of passive learners. It has been found that engaged students actually do learn more and are more satisfied with their courses than those who are not engaged (Aiken, et al., 2017; Eastman, Iyer, & Eastman, 2011; Mendini & Peter, 2018; Taylor, et al., 2011). The weight of the evidence in the literature infers that student engagement is a useful predictor of higher education quality provision and therefore should represent an explicit organizational and stakeholder pedagogical objective (Taylor, et al., 2011).

We think of student engagement as a psychological process that represents both (1) the time and energy students invest in educationally purposeful activities and (2) the effort institutions devote to using effective educational practices (Kuh, 2003; Marks, 2000; Medina & Peter, 2019). And while we generally believe that technology can have a positive effect on learning and engagement, this may not always be the case (Cheryan et al., 2014; Medini & Peter, 2019). Online courses may have negative effects versus face-to-face courses with regards to student engagement and satisfaction with social dynamics (Mendini & Peter, 2019; Przybylski & Weinstein, 2012; Summers, et al., 2005).

Flexibility and Convenience

If the coronavirus pandemic of 2020/2021 has taught the academic community anything, it is the need for curricular flexibility. One of the key factors associated with student satisfaction and the classroom is the flexibility that can be attained with online classrooms in general and the flipped classroom in particular (Sahin & Shelley, 2008; Bolliger & Halupa, 2012). Online education alternatives allow students the opportunity to work remotely, often times in their personal dwellings, and with many aspects of the class not only where it is convenient, but *when* it is convenient. Arbaugh and Duray (2002) find that flexibility in course delivery comes as a result of the medium being both place and time independent, allowing course conversations to continue over extended periods (Harasim 1990; Leidner & Jarvenpaa, 1995; Taylor, 1996). Also, the potential range of students, faculty, and guest speakers becomes much broader because time and location barriers have been removed (Berger, 1999; Arbaugh & Duray, 2002; Bailey & Cotlar, 1994).

E-Books

As far back as 2011, Amazon reported that electronic books, or e-books, outsold print books (Zhang & Kudva, 2014). Some even believe that traditional print media may become obsolete in the future (Gomez, 2008; Negroponte, 1995; Nunberg, 1996; Zhang & Kudva, 2014). As e-book availability grows, so does e-book popularity within the college curriculum.

A broad study of e-book and print book versions of 2,852 books, over the course of a year with information collected monthly found that people in different disciplines used e-books and print books differently. Preferences were found based upon subject and classification, a finding that suggested e-books and print books fulfilled different functions (Christianson & Aucoin, 2005; Zhang & Kudva, 2014).

While e-books are quickly replacing traditional, hard copy texts in the classroom, and garnering even greater acceptance in online learning and flipped classroom environments, the need to better understand student acceptance of e-book technology is growing as well. Even if e-books are identical in content, there remains a need to better understand if, and how, they may differ in function. Should they be similar in function, one could conceivably replace the other. If both e-books and hard copy books are not similar in function, they would then simply complement each other (Zhang & Kudva, 2014).

Literature Review and Summary

The progression toward more technology focused curricula brings with it the need to understand student perceptions of not only online education, but the pedagogical details surrounding the many varied forms of online education that are being offered. The flipped classroom offers students and faculty a unique opportunity to blend both online and face-to-face instruction pedagogy into one course. This qualitative study uncovers student perceptions of the flipped classroom pedagogy, and provides the academy with insights surrounding student perceptions and aspects of the pedagogy that could be both embraced and enhanced.

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this qualitative study is to (a) explore in greater depth how the respondent feels about the hybrid learning experience, (b) obtain deeper, richer explanations than typically provided in survey results, (c) provide an opportunity for students to voice their satisfaction or dissatisfaction with various aspects of hybrid learning, and (d) offer powerful insights into the thoughts and beliefs of undergraduate students as they navigate hybrid, flipped classrooms.

Qualitative methods have the power to take the researcher into the minds and lives of the respondents (McCracken, 1988). When examining the perceptions of the respondents, it is important for the researcher to reflect on his or her own mindset (Ball, 1990). One must consider his or her own constructs and possible ideological biases, the constructs of the respondents, the research data, as well as structural and historical forces that all impact qualitative research (Anderson, 1989). Given the abrupt nature in which higher education has been forced to rely on online learning as a result of the pandemic, the importance of conducting exploratory research on students' perceptions of online learning (whether hybrid or 100% online) cannot be underestimated.

Glaser and Strauss (1967) are recognized as the founders of qualitative research methods through their seminal research of investigating the perceptions of the dying. Glesne and Peshkin (1992, p. 65) explain that "the opportunity to learn about what you cannot see and to explore alternative explanations of what you do see is the special strength of interviewing in qualitative inquiry." In other words, qualitative methodology is appropriate when "you don't know what you don't know" as opposed to quantitative methodology when "you do know what you don't know."

Glaser and Strauss (1967, p.105) developed a grounded theory approach of multiple stages of collecting, refining, and categorizing qualitative data. Using what they called a constant comparative methodology, Glaser and Strauss (1967) incorporated four stages: "(1) comparing incidents applicable to each category, (2) integrating categories and their properties, (3) delimiting the theory, and (4) writing the theory." This constant comparative method "combines systematic data collection, coding, and analysis with theoretical sampling in order to generate theory that is integrated, close to the data, and expressed in a form clear enough for further testing" (Conrad, et al., 1993, p. 280). With a grounded approach, theory evolves while research is being conducted and data is being collected and categorized and analyzed in multiple stages (Strauss & Corbin, 1994). Using this grounded theory technique, the researchers of this study served as the instrument by coding compared incidents, integrating categories, delimiting theory, and writing the theory from the responses to the semi-open ended questions.

Respondents and Procedures

Both quantitative and qualitative methods were originally implemented in this study which analyzed 153 students' perspectives of hybrid teaching in the Department of Marketing within the College of Business at a large, public, Midwestern university. This project focused on the intricate thoughts and beliefs of students by using both quantitative measures (37 scales) and qualitative measures (5 open-ended questions) from a prior study conducted by Kim, Kim, Khera, and Getman, (2014). These authors analyzed the experience of non-Business students from the Engineering, Social Studies, and Humanities disciplines in flipped classrooms at an urban university. Our study contributes to the body of higher education online learning literature by focusing on Business students in a more suburban/rural setting.

Quantitative studies from this data include the findings of Judson, Black, and Beggs (2018). They concluded that the instructors were well-prepared to offer a quality online or blended course, however, students may need guidance in enhancing the end-state value in their contributions to the online or blended course. Judson (2019) also examined this data and concluded that students' perceptions of the teaching presence of hybrid course instructors reflected no significant differences between male and female students. The questions focused on the students' perceptions of their own social, cognitive, learner, and technology were also very similar. However, some significant differences between genders were evident in four of the five categories of the survey: female respondents indicated greater comfort levels, more optimism about application, higher likelihood of goal setting, and greater ease of learning as it relates to the flipped classroom.

This particular study focuses entirely on the qualitative data from the same study involving the 153 students in the Department of Marketing within the College of Business. Permission to conduct the study was obtained from the authors' Institutional Review Board which approved the methodology. In order to explore students' perspectives of the flipped classroom experience, semi-open ended questions were provided online in four courses (six sections total) of two instructors who offered a hybrid (or blended), flipped format (one day a week was online to prepare for the next class that week which was face-to-face). Participation in this study was provided to these junior and senior-level students as an extra credit opportunity in the following asynchronous blended (50% online and 50% face-to-face) marketing courses: Fundamentals of Integrated Marketing Communication, New Developments in IMC Strategy, Sport Marketing, Business Ethics and Sustainability. All respondents had chosen a marketing concentration at the University (e.g., General Marketing, Integrated Marketing Communication, Advanced Marketing Analytics, and Professional Sales). Students were assured that their professor would not have access to the submitted responses and that confidentiality would be a priority.

FINDINGS

Themes

Following data collection, the data was analyzed using the four stages defined by Glaser and Strauss (1967), and several important themes emerged. These themes are (1) the presence of student anxiety (or lack thereof) associated with the hybrid classroom, (2) the need for a technological Plan B, (3) engagement with the course material provided in the hybrid format, (4) the flexibility and/or convenience of the hybrid classroom, (5) the contribution of digital E-books used by the students, and (6) levels of learning during hybrid classrooms.

Student Anxiety

Student anxiety as a theme was found in responses to these semi-open ended questions:

- *Describe how you used technology to support your work on the "Flipped Classroom" activities.*
- *Describe if you were nervous about your ability to use technology. If you were nervous, did your anxiety lessen as you worked with the tools, stay the same, or increase?*

In general, the majority of the students seemed to experience little to no anxiety about the hybrid format. It is entirely possible that the instructors feel much more anxiety about teaching in a hybrid format than their students do in taking an online course. Below are examples of student responses regarding their feelings of little to no anxiety about using a hybrid format:

Technology is not a problem for us millennials, it comes naturally no sweat no anxiety.

I was not nervous at all. I have had hybrid classed before and actually prefer them over traditional classes.

I was not nervous about the ability to use technology.

I was able to get my work done efficiently because I am good with computers.

Never was nervous.

I am not necessarily tech savvy but had no problem using technology for the online portion of our flipped classroom.

I was not nervous. I work with technology every day at work for the past 3 years, so I felt very comfortable about having to use my laptop daily for this class.

Working with technology increased my awareness on the background on topics, thus lessening my anxiety.

I have had blended classrooms before and I enjoy them.

Although there were some students who expressed a slight amount of anxiety which they were able to overcome it as can be seen in the examples below:

I would say that freshman year I was scared to use technology for classes. However since then, so many of my classes have been online that I am very comfortable with how it works. I usually just double check that everything has been successfully uploaded before I log off. It also helps when the learning management system sends you a confirmation email that your work has been submitted.

My anxiety lessened as I had more flipped courses.

I was slightly nervous, but having to use it has helped me become more familiar with it.

I was nervous at first but my anxiety lessened after I learned how to use the technology.

I think that sometimes it feels overwhelming just how many things you have to do online. Maybe splitting them up with different due dates would help.

Plan B Needed

Plan B needed as a theme was found in responses to this semi-open ended question:

- *Describe if you were nervous about your ability to use technology. If you were nervous, did your anxiety lessen as you worked with the tools, stay the same, or increase?*

An interesting aspect of student anxiety focused on possible computer or technological issues. Some students expressed solving these issues with their own Plan B for possible technological problems. Ideally, all students taking a hybrid/online course should have a Plan B in the event of technological issues occurring when an exam or assignment is due. The following examples reflect how a technological issue might cause the students to feel anxious:

I would say the only time I had anxiety and was nervous about using technology would be when the internet would stop working in the middle of a quiz and I would worry I wouldn't have enough time to finish the quiz. Other than that, finding the articles and videos as well as taking the online quizzes I had no issues or concerns from the beginning.

The only time I was ever nervous was when my computer wasn't acting usual. Sometimes it shuts down on its own in the middle of unsaved work.

I was not really nervous about the technology. However, there is always the fear that I didn't upload an assignment correctly, or that due to internet issues, I wouldn't have access.

The only time I ever had nerves was when I was about to take a quiz. Sometimes the learning management system freezes or accidentally deletes answers but this is something that will come with the use of technology. After a while I always made sure I was in a wifi-secure location to take the quizzes.

The only anxiety I encounter when using technology is the fear of my Wi-Fi disconnecting while taking a timed test when I know we only have one chance to take it. As the semester went on, I made sure I would take quizzes where I knew I had a secured connection, other than that, I had no problems.

Engagement

Engagement as a theme was found in responses to these semi-open ended questions:

- *Describe how you would change the "Flipped Classroom" activities to be more valuable to you.*
- *Provide any additional comments about your experience with the "Flipped Classroom" activities.*

Many students shared perceptions that seemed to focus on the theme of engagement.

Overall, the responses expressed positive notions of engagement with the material offered in a hybrid format. The students were not expressly asked to address their engagement levels, however, many within the respondent group of 153 students did so as indicated in the examples below:

I really enjoy the flipped classroom setting. I truly believe that it holds me more responsible for my work and organizing my time outside of the classroom.

I learned the chapter before coming to class.

I thought the flipped classrooms were great actually. I wish all of my classes were like that because it gave me a chance to learn the material ahead of time

I would discuss the chapter module first, then make it live for us to work on.

It allows us to independently learn about the topic that is reinforced in class discussions.

I really enjoy the flipped classroom. I believe I get more out of it because there is more room for discussion in class.

When reading the articles, I would sometimes get lost in a topic and continue researching that topic.

It was fun because all of the topics had at least 2 articles that I found very interesting and wanting to know more about.

I like it because you get to learn the material prior and can aid in interaction in the classroom.

While most of the comments relating to engagement were positive, some were more critical as shown and wanted engagement with others as shown in the examples below:

I would get rid of the forums on the learning management system and instill more group activities that would facilitate more organic conversations about the course content.

More projects to get to know more people. Make the activities more interactive.

Discussion should be all in class, not on a learning management system forum. Not a lot of students actually go back and look at forum responses on learning management system. It feels like a task rather than an engaging discussion.

Flexibility and Convenience

Flexibility/convenience as a theme was found in responses to these semi-open ended questions:

- *Describe how you would change the "Flipped Classroom" activities to be more valuable to you.*
- *Describe any technologies that might improve the "Flipped Classroom" activities.*
- *Describe how you used technology to support your work on the "Flipped Classroom" activities.*
- *Provide any additional comments about your experience with the "Flipped Classroom" activities.*

The most positive theme noted in the data was the overwhelming perception that the hybrid format provides the students with greater flexibility and convenience. Hybrid teaching with at least one class per week online provides the opportunity for the students to complete homework, accommodate their work schedules, learn asynchronously with greater freedom, and generally balance their time more efficiently. Below are some examples of response to the above questions:

I truly enjoyed this class being half online. The time I had away from the classroom I was able to use to complete my homework.

It makes time for homework flexible as well as the rest of my schedule. I think that this class was a perfect balance.

The reason why the activities worked so well in this course was because we had a great explanation every week of that tasks we needed to complete. In addition, we were constantly reminded of the activities we needed to think about in the long-term. If teachers actively stay on top of informing students of tasks, this type of classroom will be successful.

I love hybrid classes because they are majority online and they only meet once a week. This gives me plenty of time to read through assignments and complete each module before meeting with the class to discuss.

It fits personalities, learning abilities and work schedules that provide value to learning to particular students.

Connect activities were valuable in learning the material and very convenient as well. The learning management system made all the information available and easy to access. I used it by being able to work from anywhere where I have internet.

The flipped classroom allowed me to time manage my schedule better and allocate time to other studies.

Technology allowed me to keep track of the assignments due each week. The repetitiveness helped keep things organized.

Obviously using the learning management system was a huge part of working through a flipped classroom. The learning management system site was easy to read and the Sports Business Journal portion of the class was easy to access. Once I figured out where everything was online in the beginning of the semester, the rest was easy.

It was nice to do the work on my own time rather than being forced to attend class twice a week.

I really liked it. Since we could learn it on our own and then come to class prepared with questions.

I enjoy it, because it allows me to complete work when I am able to.

I really liked it! I like being able to do my work when I want to do it.

I enjoy the freedom to complete the assignments at my own pace and appreciate the flipped classrooms

Potentially creating a form or document that had all of the articles that needed to be read and the videos that needed to be watched all in one place. At times it was difficult to open one article needed for the assignment

It was actually good, because I truly enjoyed coming to class the one day a week.

I wish all courses were done this way.

I enjoyed the class being set up this way.

I like not having to go to the class twice a week.

E-Books

E-books as a theme was found in responses to this semi-open ended question:

- *Describe how you used technology to support your work on the "Flipped Classroom" activities.*

An interesting observation in the data was that comments focused on digital E-books or online learning activities from the publisher were positive as shown in the examples below:

The combination of smartbook use and online articles created a great book of information for me to excel in the class.

I liked the smart book because it allowed me to see some of the important aspects of the chapter.

I like the activities we use now for the flipped classroom. The only activity I would change or add would be another connect learn smart activity. I feel like another activity that went along with the book would be beneficial while reading through the textbook. Being able to have online and hard copy books.

One critical comment on learning included:

Less use of company online textbooks which don't facilitate learning at all. Instead these textbooks teach kids easier ways to find quick answers and not think for themselves.

Learning

Learning as a theme was found in responses to these semi-open ended questions:

- *Describe how you used technology to support your work on the "Flipped Classroom" activities.*

The comments on learning were varied in that some held perceptions that the hybrid format enhance their learning and some held perceptions that it did not. In analyzing the data, it was noted that many did not make any statements about their levels of learning, perhaps what was *not* stated about learning is significant to this study. These are examples of answers to the question above:

I personally think the flipped classroom makes learning a bit more difficult. I would much rather be taught the information ahead of time so I feel more comfortable taking the quizzes.

Doesn't make sense to go over what we just did in the modules in class.

Taking quizzes after the material has been taught in lecture, it was difficult to take a quiz not understanding the topic completely.

I would say the learning experience was great for this course, although for more discreet/difficult concepts maybe meet to discuss.

It is easier for me to learn the material in class and then be able to apply it later on for an assignment.

However, for this class I found it easier to go over the material and assignments before the lecture made it easier to learn and remember the material.

I used the connect activities to go back and re learn material i felt unsure about.

I think that flipped classrooms allows for students to learn more about the marketing profession, only outside of the classroom.

Makes learning in class simpler.

I find it very beneficial to have flipped classroom and activities. This has helped save time and I've learned just as much.

I really enjoy "Flipped Classrooms". I feel like I am able to learn better by teaching myself and then going over it in the classroom. I also think that it is nice to be able to learn at your own pace.

This was a suggestion from one student that could increase learning:

I prefer as simple as possible. All 5 of my classes use a different software/program that I need to learn just to take the class.

Additional Themes

Additional themes were found in responses to this semi-open ended question:

- *Describe any technologies that might improve the "Flipped Classroom" activities.*

One aspect of our qualitative method that we didn't know to ask about was the strong desire to engage with the course using a smart phone and/or an app as these examples reflect:

- Make an app for mobile devices so students can study on the go.

- Smart phone use for the book.
- Classroom app for smart phone.
- Phone usage, to check emails, take notes, etc.
- More content that could be accessed on mobile.

The respondents did a great job of brain-storming other technological features about which the researchers would not have known to inquire:

- Online video lectures
- Better online lectures
- Online tutorials with teacher's voice over explaining topics
- Instructional videos
- There could be more videos or visuals
- Video lectures
- Video lectures may be beneficial
- Online video lessons
- Video conferences
- Online lectures for the day we don't meet (ex: powerpoint with voice over)
- The ability to set custom alerts for when assignments are due. Maybe set up a reminder via email & have it send it to you.
- Maybe recordings for those that may miss a class and want the information given in that weeks class session
- Polling clickers
- Social Media

I wish there was a way to save a discussion post that you are working on. There are times that I would get kicked out of the system before I finished a post. Once logging back on, I would lose all that I was working on.

- Games
- Maybe a live chat for learning management system or a book with a better search function.
- Allow the "find" feature to work
- Application activities
- Auto save on learning management system.
- Ted Talks

Potentially creating a form or document that had all of the articles that needed to be read and the videos that needed to be watched all in one place. At times it was difficult to open one article needed for the assignment or pullup and download a video. If it were all in one place, it would be simpler to read and follow along. Maybe an online chat with the instructor for help rather than emailing back and forth, like a designated time to ask questions and she answers.

DISCUSSION

The adoption of online, hybrid pedagogy, particularly the flipped classroom, brings with it the opportunity to take advantage of today's more advanced technology, and a means by which to better meet the needs and wants of our more technologically adept students. The pedagogy is, however, a significant departure from more traditional means by which marketing students are taught. There is obviously a risk that while technologically advanced, the technology may be ineffective in producing positive learning outcomes.

Technology based anxiety can have a negative impact upon both student performance and course satisfaction (Sun, et al., 2008). Our research has found, however, that very little student anxiety can be

associated with the hybrid, or flipped, pedagogy when properly incorporated in a marketing class. Many of us in academia should accept the fact that our students may be more adept with technology than we are. As one student put it, “Technology is not a problem for us millennials, it comes naturally, no sweat no anxiety.” Obviously, technology that is not properly applied, is dated, or is not available to all students would cause problems in nearly any educational setting. But for the majority of today’s marketing students, incorporating technology in their studies is not a hindrance, but a welcome addition to the curriculum. The key, of course, is not incorporating technology simply for technology’s sake.

One reason many students appear to overcome technological barriers is that they have developed what they refer to as a “Plan B” should their technological capabilities fail them. Addressing the relatively minor technology anxiety associated with a hybrid class such as the flipped classroom may be addressed by either providing students with, or at least strongly recommending, “Plan B” alternatives. Building such alternatives into the curriculum could serve to not only reduce course anxiety but enhance student participation and substantially reduce the stress placed on the teacher when faced with student-based technology dilemmas.

Getting students to read course material outside of class in order to better prepare for class discussion can be a difficult challenge for many marketing teachers. That being said, course engagement may well be a sound predictor of higher education quality (Taylor, et al., 2011). The thought that technology can significantly enhance engagement may come as a surprise to some in the academy. Study participants are quick to point out how they are exposed to the material outside of class and then are in a better position to discuss the material in class. Providing students with the technology that allows for “pre-class preparation”, requiring it in the syllabus, and then taking advantage of such preparation in lively, engaged, class discussions all serves as an endorsement for the hybrid, flipped classroom pedagogy.

The use of e-books, commonly found in the hybrid and flipped classroom settings, is also generally well-received by students. As we move more toward the digital classroom every day, the incorporation of e-books and similar digital material becomes a more common element of education and is proving to be accepted by our marketing students.

Study participants also speak highly of the flexibility that hybrid marketing classes offer. Students dealing with employment conflicts, family commitments, extracurricular responsibilities, distance/travel barriers, etc. appreciate the flexibility inherent in the hybrid, flipped classroom format. The COVID-19 pandemic brought with it a dramatic change in the way that many people “went to work and went to school”. The flexibility advantages associated with remote learning may have become a staple in higher education, and one that students have come to not only appreciate, but demand from their college of choice.

Unfortunately, and perhaps ironically, with so much being said supporting the key elements associated with the hybrid, or flipped classroom format, many students questioned the degree to which the pedagogy ultimately enhanced their learning. It was suggested that the learning experience could be enhanced with better online/video lectures, but left unsaid was the specific role that the individual professor played in the actual deployment of the technology and teaching of the class. In the end, what students may be stating is that the technology offered by the hybrid or flipped classroom allows is of significant value, but it is the teacher who still plays the preeminent role in delivering a quality educational experience.

CONCLUSION

This study explores the perceptions of junior and senior-level Marketing students at a large, Midwestern public university. A compelling future research endeavor would be to explore the perceptions of students in a different stage of their university experience (e.g., freshmen and sophomore-level university students). It is possible that students with less experience navigating a large university would experience more anxiety surrounding flipped courses, be less prepared with a Plan B, value flexibility and convenience less than 100% face-to-face courses, etc. While the Kim, Kim, Khera, & Getman (2014) study examined non-Business majors from a large, West Coast public university, it would also be interesting to explore the perceptions of students at smaller, private institutions where they may experience a different type of atmosphere in terms of student support. Integrating all of the qualitative data across the university stage

spectrum (freshmen through senior), various regions of the country, public versus private institutions would help tell the complete story of flipped learning. These collective findings could also lead to another more comprehensive survey to be administered post-pandemic to ascertain if perceptions or beliefs have changed among students since enduring a primarily remote style of learning.

Hybrid or flipped have been called “the best of both worlds,” meaning the flipped mode offers flexibility and convenience while still engaging students face-to-face. We soon will need to investigate whether the pandemic significantly altered those perceptions.

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