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Towards a New Learning Ecology: A Critical Participatory Action Research for a Transformative Mission

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Abstract

The aim of this study is to serve as a self-transformative process targeting undergraduate students' professional perspectives, sayings, doings and meaning makings on the conventional classroom management thought by introducing them to the possibilities of Web 3.0 technologies. The study was designed as a critical participatory action research (CPAR) and conducted with the participation of 46 undergraduate students (29 female, 17 male) from English Language Teaching department during the first term of 2019-2020 academic year (just before the COVID-19 closures) in Gaziantep University. To guide participants, a Video Clip Assessment Rubric was developed collaboratively. Critical self-reflections and in-class discussions were the sources of data. A great majority of the participants reflected that flipped learning could be a promising alternative over conventional pedagogies. They also declared the need for a comprehensive preparation and professional guidance in video clip casting for flipped classes. The most outstanding actionable knowledge, on the part of participants, produced by this CPAR would be the internal transformation enabled through reinterpretation of the facts and first hand learning experiences they encountered. Some further suggestions are made for the redesign of conventional classroom management courses at undergraduate level.

Introduction

Emergence of e-learning options introduced in the forms of micro learning, mobile learning and gamification have been challenging conventional pedagogies in all aspects of education. This disruptive innovation has been transforming classrooms and schooling in an accelerated phase so far. In fact the paradigm-changing developments in the educational landscape were ignited with the advent of Web 2.0 as opposed to Web 1.0 which meant teacher directed and dominated classroom practices, provided from the supply side only and mainly characterized by time, place and choice restrictions. O'Reilly (2005) has been the first scholar to coin the term Web 2.0 and described it as the means of creating value by harnessing collective intelligence of crowds. This 'newly emerging' Web was mainly defined by an implicit 'architecture of participation' (O'Reilly, 2005, para 24). In this new modality, e-learning has been extended beyond access to information while bringing out communicative and interactive features and at the same time blending diversity and cohesiveness into a dynamic 'learning ecology' (Garrison and Anderson, 2003, p.3). Web 2.0 is referred to as "social software," "participatory

media" (Bull et al., 2008, p.106) or "social digital technologies" such as Usenet and bulletin board systems (Palfrey & Gasser, 2008, p.1) whereas Web 3.0 is referred to as "semantic web" (Ohei & Brink, 2019, p.1842). Yu (2007) defines the Semantic Web (i.e Web 3.0) as "the next step in Web evolution" and further elaborates that "It is about having data as well as documents on the Web so that machines can process, transform, assemble, and even act on the data in useful ways" (as cited in Morris, 2011, p.43).

To foster and inspire transformation of learning environments in educational institutions, equipping students with basic ICT (Internet and Communication Technologies) knowledge and skills at the early stages of their professional life is a priority task at tertiary levels. Flipped or inverted learning has become one of the innovative technologies, facilitating co-production of knowledge through social networking and enriching possibilities for independent learners free of time and space restrictions. Flipped classrooms are seen as good examples of student-centered and self-directed learning environments. However, pedagogical underpinnings of flipped learning seem to lack in theoretical framing (Koh, 2019: p.14) through which some lenses could be used for guiding and assessing practices in the field. Koh (2019) suggests four pedagogical dimensions that can be used to articulate flipped classrooms to support student-centered learning; these are Personalisation, Higher-order thinking, Self-direction and Collaboration (p.16). Flipped learning, as opposed to basic traditional teaching where teachers are at the heart of one way "teaching" practices, delivers basic non-interactive content via pre-recorded videos to reserve the class time for high-order learning experiences in a collaborative manner (Fell-Kurban, 2019; Sams & Bergmann, 2013). Through either production or use of readily available instructional videos "…students are encouraged to participate more actively in the learning process" (Arruabarrena, et al., 2021, p.2).

Although flipped learning has gained a ground in emerging pedagogical trends and becoming popular, some more studies and applicable samples from the field are needed to encourage educators for a smooth shift to flipped learning modes either totally or partially. Transition from conventional classrooms (Web 1.0) to hybrid or flipped models is still a challenging task at any level of education. In fact what improves student learning and overall performance seem be to also related with the power shift, though it is partial, taking place in a flipped ecology. When students take over their own learning responsibility, and become members of the so called "Community of Inquiry" (Garrison & Arbaugh, 2007) they begin generating knowledge without an authoritative figure (such as a teacher, a supervisor). Generating knowledge in collaborative atmosphere, inevitably, hands some power over to students in this new learning ecology. Seeing this new relationship from 'power relations' perspective is an important ethical point to make. Because reinscription of forces in a flipped learning environment is not dependent on a teacher's value judged by his/her image, and ability to gain control over the students as the only producer (of knowledge). But by the professionalism in the design and conduct of self-learning opportunities for those who are destined to become self-directed learners. As a methodological strand, Participatory Action Research (PAR) initiatives also try to challenge such power relations by making the voices of students heard and interrupting the hierarchical power (Hemy & Meshulam, 2021) inherent in the conventional classrooms.

The aim of this study is to transform a group of undergraduate students' professional perspectives by including them into the CPAR processes as active participants (co-researchers) where "flipped learning" procedures (mainly theoretical base) are introduced and instructional video clip making skills are practiced beyond conventional

classroom management course content. The conventional "classroom management" course has been redesigned to embrace flipped learning theory and practices aiming at ELT (English Language Teaching) Department 3rd grade students' preparation for a flipped learning model in the future. Therefore the research question has been crafted as such: *How do undergraduate student participants, self-critically reflect their lived experiences of a 14-week action research focused on theoretical and practical processes of Flipped Learning with a transformative perspective?*

Theoretical Framework

The major theories framing the study are Kolb's experiential learning theory and constructivism which assume that learners construct meaning from their experiences. Flipped learning is concordant with the premises of Kolb's theory of experiential learning (2014) in that he posits learning as the product of a process in which knowledge is created through the "internal transformation of experience" (p. 58). Constructivist learning embraces processes, in a context where active learning is enabled, to support participants' autonomy and relatedness, simultaneously; while encouraging them to assume increasing responsibility for the developmental restructuring process (Lebow, 1993, p.5) originating from their own practices. The Flipped Learning approach is highly congruent with these constructivist principles in that participants are engaged in making meaning direct from experience and through reflection on their autonomous doings.

Beyond these two learning-oriented theories, the very nature of the method used (i.e. CPAR) has led me to a merger of Ibn Khaldun's theory of Asabiyyah, with a special reference to "social presence" domain of Garrison's theory of 'Community of Inquiry' (Garrison & Arbaugh, 2007). As the participants "develop agency in the collaborative process of producing knowledge with the researchers, the relationships of power and solidarity change" (Olin & Pörn, 2021, p. 1). As for the group solidarity to exist, there must be a kind of social fusion binding participants together and pushing them towards a collective objective. I prefer to call the spirit of this solidarity as "asabiyyah" of Ibn Khaldun; a 14th century dialectical philosopher (Katsiaficas, 1999). Theory of Asabiyyah has been conceptualized and defined in various ways. Ibn Khaldun sees the socio-political development/change theory " Asabiyyah" which he put forward in his famous work Mukaddime (The Introduction), as the driving engine of all kinds of social and political changes (Khaldun, 1989). In fact, Ibn Khaldun used his theory of Asabiyyah to explain the transformation of societies from one state to another; namely rise and fall cycles of states and the transition from nomadic to urban societies (Kayapinar, 2006) at macro level. If we take Ibn Khaldun's concept of Asabiyyah out of its somewhat anachronistic context and reconceptualize it as the "social libido" or driving force of any social change, then it becomes a contemporary tool for understanding patterns of social change at micro level as well. Community of Inquiry incorporates three intersecting elements of presence, these are cognitive, teaching and social (Garrison, Anderson & Archer, 1999). Theory of Asabiyyah seems to be very pertinent to the notion of "group cohesion which emerges as a sub-dimension of social presence together with affective expression and open communication" (Akyol & Garrison, 2008, p.4). Group cohesion comes into existence among its members who are bound with a collective spirit heading for a transformation; in our case, moving from conventional pedagogies to self-directed; self-paced learning ecologies. Yet, group cohesion/solidarity is believed to be at its highest manifestation when confronted with an external challenge,

threat, oppression or exclusion, at moderate levels (Toynbee, 1987) leading some sort of discontentment. However, discontentment itself does not always create a desire for change; for any discontentment to become a change agent, a feeling of irresistible power ownership is also needed (Hoffer, 2002, p.11). This is usually a collective power created by group spirit. For those who were discontented with the oppressive and coercive nature of conventional classrooms, participatory action research grounds may be the ignition agent for such a group spirit.

Related Literature

It is obvious that learning is moving beyond the school walls, into the E-learning territories therefore the taken for granted premises of the 'conventional classroom management' have been shaken and becoming gradually obsolete. Actually, the question; "in what ways have classical classroom management thought been challenged by the newly emerging technology enhanced pedagogies?" has been the first question to be considered towards the organization and management of these blooming "E-learning ecologies". A growing body of literature on flipped learning theory and practice has already taken promising steps for a better understanding of the transformative power of this approach as opposed to conventional teaching-dominated environments. An action research, conducted to assess flipped learning outcomes of the fundamental nursing practice course, reported improved self-directed learning ability and critical thinking skills on the part of subjects (Kim & Kim, 2017).

Likewise in another study, aimed at examining applicability of a flipped learning course based on content analysis of the nursing students' self-reflections, found out that flipped learning can be a creative instructional model to enhance students' learning motivation (Lee & Hwang, 2016). Akçayır and Akçayır (2018) in their comprehensive review, reported flexibility as the most prominent pedagogical contribution of the flipped classrooms and improvement of student learning performance as the commonly voiced advantage of the this approach. The review also revealed a number of challenges in this model; "these are mostly related to out-of-class activities, such as inadequate student preparation prior to class" (Akçayır & Akçayır, 2018, p.340).

Santos Espino et al. (2020) in a survey, attempted to measure format preferences in the use of digital video in teaching, through the lenses of the secondary and university teachers. Findings of the study revealed substantial differences between secondary and university teachers in experience and usage of video in the classroom, with a shared positive attitude to instructor self-production of videos. In the limitations of the study researchers stressed the need for studies providing 'data from student reports and factual evidences of video production', to complement limited reliability of questionnaire-oriented surveys (Santos Espino et al., 2020, p.159). In a quasi-experimental study design, Almutairi et al. (2020) investigated the effects of six-month flipped learning period on the knowledge and skill levels of pre-service teachers in producing instructional videos. Descriptive data obtained from the study indicated significant increase in the skill and knowledge levels of the experimental group preservice teachers who received instruction with flipped learning method. Yet, it points out the need for the research designs incorporating experiential learning procedures. In an action research, Ökmen and Kılıç (2020) found out that flipped learning approach contributed to the self-regulation skills (self-efficacy, strategy selection, environmental arrangement, time management) of secondary school students.

Sharing the power with students and becoming a facilitator on the side, instead of a dominant figure on the stage, requires seeing participants as genuine collaborators in the participatory research process. Teachers' or administrators' hesitation in embracing this new role may hinder switching from one-man-show teaching to a collaborative learning mode. Because instructors tend to maintain their current epistemological beliefs and habitual practices when faced with professional challenges (Fullan, 2015). Therefore, flipped learning should be introduced to pre-service teachers, wrapped up in a non-hierarchical CPAR process, at the possible earliest stage of their professional life. Taking such a necessity as the starting point, this article seeks to contribute to the development of new practices and actionable knowledge for creating non oppressive and just learning environments through CPAR. This intention has been congruent with the paradigmatic stance where (preservice) teachers actually involved in research for a self-transformation while transforming teaching and learning practices at organizational level. It is assumed that effective research is best conducted by individuals who are facing real educational problems on the ground (Carr & Kemmis, 1986).

As the literature brings into view, streams of research providing data from experiential learning contexts, enriched with participant reflections are in high demand. This particular study, therefore, engaged in a participatory action research to help remedy this demand. In sum, the significance of the study mainly comes from its being the first CPAR, employing experiential learning procedures, conducted to develop a key Flipped Learning skill (i.e producing an instructional video clip) to be utilized by prospective teachers in the future and provision of a transformative perspective on the applicability of Flipped Learning approach

Methodology

A qualitative inquiry embraces techniques and approaches such as human communication, observation, analysis, intuitive interpretation of phenomena as lived by people in its immediate social context. The ultimate goal in such an endeavor is to gain a deeper insight into human experiences through the lenses of the parties, actually experiencing that particular phenomenon; without any intent to explain or to make prediction. In this way, participants' perceptions, feelings, views and life patterns are unearthed without control, manipulation or any concern for objectivity (Leininger, 1985). The PAR's philosophical back ground is in line with the "postmodern tradition of embracing the dialectic of shifting understandings" in which "collaboration and partnership equalize power between researcher and researched" and "knowledge is produced for individual and community change and empowerment" (Kelly, 2005, p.66). Participatory Action Research (PAR) is a strand of qualitative research methodology and is considered a subset of action research, which is the "systematic collection and analysis of data for the purpose of taking action and making change" by generating practical knowledge (Gillis & Jackson, 2002, p.264). According to Taggart (1997) "individual action researchers change themselves and support others in their own efforts to change and together work to change practices and institutions" (McTaggart, 1997, p. 34).

On the one hand, emergence of participatory action research can be traced back to Kurt Lewin who addressed problems of segregation, different forms of domination, and assimilation for assisting people in resolving these issues in the course of change while studying the impact of change(s) simultaneously (Stringer & Genat, 2004). On the other hand, the critical edge of participatory action research can be attributed to the work of Paulo Freire

who is concerned with emancipatory processes put in effect for empowering the poor and marginalized members of society about issues of oppression, domination, discrimination arising from politics and power relations (Freire, 1970). In fact the term "critical theory" was actually dubbed by Max Horkheimer in his 1937 essay titled "Traditional and Critical Theory" (Horkheimer, 1972). A comprehensive definition of critical participatory action research given by Kemmis et al. (2014) is as follows:

> "…critical participatory action research is a social process of collaborative learning for the sake of individual and collective self-formation, realized by groups of people who join together in changing the practices through which they interact in a shared social world—a shared social world in which, for better or for worse, we live with the consequences of one another's actions" (Kemmis, Mc Taggart & Nixon, 2014, p.20).

Epistemological assumptions of action research suggest that knowledge creation is an active process where knowledge is not determined and the object of the inquiry is the "I" (McNiff & Whitehead, 2006, p.26). In sum, participatory action research is a dynamic process where social phenomena are investigated collaboratively (researcher and the researched) to generate progressive knowledge and to take transformative action against a problem in its socially constructed context.

Study Method and Data Collection

The study was designed as a critical participatory action research and conducted with the participation of 46 undergraduate students from English Language Teaching (EFL) department during the first term of 2019-2020 academic year (*just before the Covid-19 lockdowns*) in Gaziantep University, Turkey. Time interval of the study consisted of 14 weekly 3-hour class sessions with 3rd grade EFL department student-participants (29 females and 17 males). Action research was preferred in this study because there was a noteworthy challenge faced by undergraduate students with regard to the conventional "classroom management course" content which will soon become obsolete. Pre-service teachers should have been introduced to technology enhanced learning approaches and equipped with some critical skills needed in practice. Action research fits best when practice changing practice is sought.

The inquiry combined qualitative methodology and participative action design with a critical edge. The introduction of flipped learning approach, as opposed to conventional classroom management course content, aimed at developing a critical skill needed on the part of pre-service teachers. This critical skill would be casting an instructional video clip to be utilized by prospective students in the future; when 3rd grade EFL department students begin working as teachers. To guide participant-students, a Video Clip Assessment Rubric was developed collaboratively in the course of research. Students were encouraged to refer to this rubric while casting their instructional video clips. The skill development was based on three learning domains; understanding the nature of flipped learning thoroughly, gaining actionable knowledge on video clip making processes and addressing target audience effectively in a short video clip in the pursuit of professional perspective transformation in this practice changing effort.

The rationale behind the study has been devised by classroom discussions guided by the researcher and the participant students. Participants were provided with extensive reading materials such as, Flip Your Classroom-Reach Every Student Every Class Everyday (Sams & Bergmann, 2012), Talk Like TED (by Carmine Gallo, 2014) One World School House-Reimagining Education (by Salman KHAN, 2012), How to Shoot Video That Doesn't Suck (by Steve STOCKMAN, 2011), Video Ideas (by Tim GRABHAM, 2018) and Video in the Age of Digital Learning (by Jornas KÖSTER, 2018). Some TEDx videos were also included in the "must read and watch" list after negotiations with the participant-collaborator students. There was no textbook advised as the only source of knowledge, but open sources accessible to everyone. This was a democratic characteristic of the participatory adventure to open space for the representation of interests of all parties. Furthermore, mutual involvement of the collaborators in a decision-making circle would be the emancipatory process itself. To enrich the trustworthiness of the study we tried to triangulate the data sources using course materials (PDF books and TEDx videos mentioned above) and reflective comments mainly emerged during our classroom discussions with participants (especially in the course of rubric development); by interpreting some salient themes in the light of theoretical aspects (Patton, 2002) such as constructivism and experiential learning already learned about Flipped Learning approach.

The data, leading us to the findings of the study were retrieved using various approaches; from course-based (comparative and evaluative) in-class discussions, oral reflections of the co-researcher students regarding their readings of the books and reflective thoughts on the selected YouTube video clips; personal and group experiences throughout this hands-on "practice-changing practice"; and finally from a written reflective essay on the overall assessment of the whole term engagements. Reflections on the critical incidents, especially experienced during the video clip casting initiatives, have generated the real transformative learning instances. Because reflective practice has been utilized as a means of articulating and developing knowledge hidden in practice (Nicholl & Higgins, 2004, p.578). In this sense, CPAR can be seen as a transformative learning tool for all the participants whose beliefs and professional views are challenged when exposed to multiple perspectives as members of a "community of inquiry". Furthermore, action research enriched with a critical stance can pave the way to research and the professional development for teachers, all together (Carr & Kemmis, 1986).

Data Analysis

There is a considerable literature on reflective thinking and writing. Although the interpretations are not always convergent, they compile some useful pieces for the justification of CPAR. For example, Schön (1983, 1987) suggests that reflection is a way for linking theory and practice; Kincheloe (1991) refers to teacher empowerment role of reflective action; individual, social and professional emancipation are also brought into consideration by Carr and Kemmis (1986). Reflection can be summarized as a dynamic introspective and metacognitive endeavor to make sense of meaning of the lived experiences self-critically towards a personal transformation. The bulk of the findings came from reflections of the participants. Reflective essays (N=46) were analyzed in order to answer the research question(s). I prepared a semi-structured reflective essay protocol and submitted to the participants as the final cycle of reflective account of their experiences throughout the whole term. In the analysis I aimed at revealing the different ways in which participants experienced this transformative process as members of

"Community of Inquiry" (Garrison & Arbaugh, 2007). One of the features, sought in the reflective essays has been the ways video casting processes experienced. Different "ways of experiencing" (conception) (Säljö, 1997, p.176) was the primary unit of analysis similar to that of phenomenographic genre. Because video casting has been the key skill targeted in this action research. I developed the coding scheme using open coding techniques as suggested by Miles & Huberman (1994) via thematic analysis. All the reflective essay were analyzed and convergent and divergent expressions were interpreted denoting personal transformational learning experiences and conception of the Flipped Learning mode. The first round of the thematic analysis resulted in 64 codes which were sorted into 14 categories and 5 themes. This coding scheme was independently crosschecked by a colleague researcher with a strong back ground in reflective analysis. I made adjustments on the coding scheme after having discussions with the colleague and came up with 42 codes, 10 categories and 4 themes.

Findings

Findings of the study were categorized based on the emergent themes such as; general conception of the Flipped Learning approach, perceived criteria for the success of FL-in relation with transformation of participants' mindset. The current education system; individual needs/requirements for transition to Flipped Learning mode; challenges faced in the instructional video making/casting processes; belief in applicability of FL

Theme 1. How FL is conceived

While some participants expressed their skeptic and cautious perceptions concerning the Flipped Learning as a newly emerging pedagogical ecology; most of the participants were hopeful and optimistic in their reflections (see Table 1).

Table 1. Analysis of the Data on "*how FL in general is conceived as newly emerging ecology of learning"* by the Participant Co-researcher Students

Themes	**Categories**	**Codes**
How flipped learning is conceived	Students' (participants) role(s)	Student-directed learning
		Sharing the "responsibility of learning" with students
		Student can progress on their own
		Individualized learning
		Giving students the opportunity to act at their own pace
	The nature of flipped learning environment	High-order learning takes place in the classroom
		Freedom from time and place restrictions
		Easy to handle massive content
		Providing a large instructional video pool with the teacher
		Fits the requirements of digital era instruction
		A convenient instrument for the Z-Generation
		Exciting and far from monotony

Regarding her experiences throughout the whole term, participant-1 proposed a success that depends on student attitudes:

> *It may be partially successful. Because the task of learning and teaching does not end only with the teacher. For example, the student must also be an individual who is curious, enthusiastic and at least able to study regularly. I think it takes time for students, who have already accustomed to traditional teacher-centered education, to adjust.*

She further added that:

> *As a teacher candidate, I understand that I have to convey my message to my future students that my flipped classes will be exciting and enjoyable; however I am not sure whether I can do this…*

On the credit side, Participant 38 gave a reflection of her experiences as such:

> *I think the pedagogical methods used by Salman KHAN can be a light for us in the learning process. It offers us a different perspective on learning and I think such a learning approach will contribute a lot.*

In the process of gaining an insight into the theoretical knowledge base and applicable examples of flipped learning, it is obvious that the participants understood that they were faced with an unusual pedagogical approach. Both the belief in its feasibility and the perceived difficulties of transformation indicate that the flipped model poses a serious challenge to traditional teaching and classroom management approaches. This perspective can be taken as an indication of a transformative thought developed as the action research unfolded on an experiential learning ground.

Theme 2. Criteria/conditions for the success in transformation to the FL

This theme has two categories in defining the conditions/criteria required; for transformation of students' mindset and attitudes subsequently; and transformation of the existing conventional education system (see Table 2).

Table 2. Thematic Analysis of Individual and System Level Conditions needed for a Smooth Transition

Theme	Categories	Codes
Criteria for the success of flipped learning, related with	Transformation of the students' mindset/attitudes	Adoption of autonomous learning
		Active participation of students
		Moving learning beyond classroom walls
		Taking responsibility for learning
	Transformation of the existing system	Challenging the outdated pedagogies
		Provision of technical and ICT infrastructures (soft and hard)
		Skill improvement in the use of ICT
		Equality of opportunity in education
		Cultural and philosophical transformation in educational landscape
		Changing teachers' perspective for the self-development

Taking “responsibility” was one of the salient concepts voiced by the participants:

> *In this model, I think I need to make sure that students want to take the big responsibility that falls on them; so I have to help change the minds of those who think negatively...*(Participant 14).
>
> *It is necessary to be responsible because in this model, it is very important to do the homework given.* (Participant 15).
>
> *The flipped learning/classroom approach is an idea that can be successful, but if the student takes responsibility... the teacher is somewhat passive in this approach... if the student is responsible and aware of his own learning process, this model will work....*(Participant 26).

The organizational behavior model basically arising from an oppressive pedagogical culture manifested by imperious teachers and passive students who do not take responsibility for their own learning, shows how important a transformation could be in that forming a mindset saying "another model is possible..."

Reflections regarding the need on the transformation of existing education system, participant 33 says:

> *Yes it can be successful, in my opinion this idea is very creative and interesting and offers a new perspective and method for both students and teachers. But it can be devastating to implement this idea all of a sudden in Turkey. Our students and our education system are timid towards new things. If applied slowly and carefully, it can be successful* (Participant 33).

Yet another participant asserts that transition from existing Turkish education system (*defined as a Prussian descendant in his terms*) to the flipped model is almost impossible if two critical conditions are not met. Here how he gives his reflection:

> *Flipped classroom model is a more of student-centered approach; of course it can be successful but some components must be present: An autonomous learner and a learning-oriented educational system. Without implementing these two aspects, this model definitely can't succeed… when considering our current education system and the attitudes of our students* (Participant 8).

The inability to innovate; a chronic disease of the Turkish education system and the inability to change the status quo, constitute the basic paradigm of students and everyone involved in the system. The above given reflection is indeed a manifestation of the discontentment with the overall educational system. Yet this discontentment can fuel a transformative initiative through a CPAR.

Theme 3. Challenges faced in the video shooting process

Throughout the CPAR, video casting and loading it on YouTube channel has been considered a critical skill for a possible transformation to FL mode. For the ease of this process participants were provided with some books and instructional material on video casting and editing. However peer support in the form of high-ICT-skill participants’ sharing of some software with their low-ICT-skill peers have been a real collaborative learning opportunity in this challenging task. This was the highlight of the “community of inquiry” in real terms (see Table 3).

Table 3. Thematic Analysis of the Reflective Account of Participants on their Video Casting Endeavor

Theme	Categories	Codes
Challenges in the video making/casting processes	Organization of the video content and presentation rigorously	Right wording
		Being easy to understand
		Using speech sound/intonation effectively
		Being time efficient
		Supporting content with images
		Choosing the topic caption
		Adding some fun/excitement
		Addressing a non-audience medium
		Recurring video editing
	Lack of technical knowledge	Lack of sound-proof environment
		Not having enough technical material
		Positioning the camera
		Lack of skill/knowledge in video casting
		Insufficient internet infrastructure/connection
	Creating appropriate content	Mastery of subject area knowledge
		Choosing a catchy title
		Difficulty in making the content explicit (*easy to follow and understand*)

Since the length of instructional video was limited to 10 minutes, a participant expressed this challenge as follows:

> *It was very difficult for me to choose the topic that I will present, because I had to make an efficient narration within a limited time* (Participant 1).

Yet, another participant put the lack of know-how in the center of her video casting endeavors:

> *While shooting the instructional video, I tried to figure out how to adjust the right angle of the camera, how to organize the back ground of the place where I will appear as a presenter and how to arrange the lights to get an ambient brightness. I had a real trial and error experience… this was really a tiring process* (Participant 10).

Lack of knowledge and experience on how to use the technologies and editing software in video casting were the real burden for most of the participants. Participant 16 shared his experience as follows:

> *Since I didn't have any prior experience with video editing programs (software) I had to shoot the video in one session. This made me anxious and while I was trying not to make any mistakes, I panicked and made awful mistakes. Therefore, I had to shoot the whole video again and again; at least 4-5 times.*

It is quite normal for Turkish students to see a skill development process, even at the university level, a highly challenging task. Because Turkish education system does not offer self-directed "learning by doing" kind of experience to its students at any level. Therefore, our action research has been an extremely important medium where experiential learning and skill development opportunities are offered.

Theme 4. Belief in applicability of FL

The main objective of this Critical Participatory Action Research has been creating a transformational learning experience while putting "practice-changing practices" into practice. Participants were valued and positioned as inquirers and co-creators of knowledge while their confidence grew and professional perspectives change along the way (see Table 4).

Table 4. Thematic analysis of the reflections on the applicability of the flipped learning approach

Themes	**Categories**	**Codes**
Belief in applicability of FL	Encouraged to adapt FL	Monitoring the video before launching
		less distractions
		More effective
		Realizing that different approaches are possible
		Overcoming fears and anxieties
		Time efficiency
	Confusion about implementation processes	Organization of the content of videos
		Assumptions about the difficulty of students' adaption
		Not sure if FL will be an adequate process for learning in Turkish context
		Lack of interaction in videos (*asynchronous mode*)
	Transformation of perspectives as opposed to traditional education	Incorporating different technologies into the process
		Designing learning processes having fun in it
		Effective learning
		Becoming a teacher out of the box
		Keeping up with technology

Most of the participants (37 out of 46) confessed that either one way or another, they had a thought-provoking, perspective-changing experience throughout this collaborative undertaking. A participant defined her thought-provoking, transformational experience and skeptical views as well:

> *This engagement have completely changed my views on traditional education. But I don't believe that I can change my students' views on traditional education in the future; I can't…* (Participant 1).

Participant 3 expressed her transformative journey and the confidence gained like this:

> *I encountered the flipped learning model for the first time, in the classroom management class. I was a little confused at first, but later on I became more convinced that it is an effective learning model.*

In the same vein, another participant described her mind shift and the enjoyment on having known an innovative learning model:

> *As a student and now a teacher candidate, I have always been discontented with our traditional education system for years. Learning this new approach has made me very comfortable. It makes me happy to think that I can be a different teacher* (Participant 7).

Concerning the applicability of FL model within the Turkish education system, participant 17 gave his somewhat pessimistic view:

> *It is difficult to implement this method in our country, and putting forward this model means making a radical change in the system, and doing this in Turkey is a very difficult situation, but if it can be done, it will increase our success rate.*

Participant 19 also seemed to have developed a negative attitude towards FL model (*simply defined as classes at home-homework is at school*);

> *I think it's an illogical idea. Maybe it will work in other cultures, but I don't think it has a chance in Turkey… may be private schools can benefit from this model.*

Some other noteworthy findings also came from the classroom discussion sessions; namely from my field notes. Developing a rubric to guide the novice instructional video makers has been a real experiential learning challenge for all of us. We collectively devised the idea of examining video shooting process from a book in our extensive reading list. The books titled 'Video in the Age of Digital Learning' (by Jornas KÖSTER, 2018) and 'How to Shoot Video That Doesn't Suck' (by Steve STOCKMAN, 2011) were the first sources in hand. Tracing the critical steps in shooting a video, we drafted the main phases of assessment to be placed in our rubric. Participant, co-researcher students sought for other open sources as well. As a result we had almost 6 different preliminary versions of a "how to shoot an instructional video rubric." Concerning this lushly experiential learning endeavor, a participant gave an account of her experience as follows:

> *At first I felt frustrated and helpless, in fact I didn't understand the connection between reading a movie making book and drafting a rubric to be used in producing an instructional video. When we created a check list of major stages and what to do in each stage, I realized that I need to transfer these criteria into a matrix as the base of my rubric. This was an amazing experience and a valuable insight for me…*

In this way we simply understand that a piece of "how to…" knowledge has been created as a result of experiential learning sessions where collaborative effort was exerted towards a common objective.

Discussion and Conclusion

CPAR is a research approach to promote personal transformation and self-awareness through self-reflections which eventually expected to change participants' (organizations' practices) perspectives and actions. This is a cyclical process where initial research lays the ground for the next action research. What is more important than this maintained research cycle is that CPAR provides a critical stance and a framework for developing an explicit set of social values which are democratic, equitable and emancipatory in nature. Through the CPAR that I conducted with the collaboration of English Language Teaching Department's 3rd grade students, a transformation at individual level seem to have been achieved. Reflections may have changed their internal logic of long-held epistemological frames by creating new knowledge structures through reinterpretation of the facts encountered.

Throughout this one-term participatory "practice-changing practice" research, students as co-researchers, for the first time in their life, enjoyed being an equal and valuable part of a research in which new ways of seeing and doing things, beyond conventional molds, are experienced. The most important evidence supporting this thesis may be the statement of a participant during the classroom discussions that stated "*I felt myself as a university student for the first time, all my life at this university*". Therefore the most remarkable output of this critical participatory action research was that the participants, on the one hand, have been the co-designers of their own learning adventure and on the other hand, they could experience a self-fulfillment on the emancipatory ground provided. The factual "action" of the research has been the initiative to "…alter the initial situation of the group, organization or community in the direction of a more self-managing, liberated, and sustainable state (Greenwood & Levin, 2006, p.6) incorporating a transformative change. In other words, the most outstanding actionable knowledge produced by this CPAR would be the internal transformation enabled through processes and first hand learning experiences on the part of participants.

As for the limitations of the study; it is not logical to suggest that one form of research taking a particular paradigmatic stance can possibly provide full understanding of an issue under scrutiny. Therefore an important caveat of the study is that the participants were undergraduate students from the same discipline (ELT Department) engaged in the study for an academic term only. This might limit the transferability of the results to other discipline contexts. In the following "action research cycles" the study should be extended into other departments of the Faculty to provide a wider range of actionable knowledge base. To this end, a similar CPAR has been launched in the Psychological Guidance and Counselling Department of the Faculty during the first term of 2021-2022 academic year.

The findings of this study concur with the Lee & Hwang's (2016) finding in that flipped learning could be a creative instructional model to enhance learning motivation. Furthermore most of the participants confessed in their reflections that Flipped Learning would be an applicable model, provided that some pre-conditions are assured. In fact, our study has come into literature as a gap-filling complement just as demanded by the studies conducted by Santos Espino et al. (2020) and Almutairi et al. (2020). Because the former pointed out the lack of research bringing evidence from student reflections, whereas the latter voiced the need for research findings incorporating experiential learning procedures. Reflections of the participants also provided evidence (see Theme 2. &Table.2) regarding their belief in assurance of "pedagogical dimensions such as personalization and self-direction" (Koh, 2019) for a smooth transition to Flipped Learning mode. This research, drawing reference to Ibn Khaldun's social theory of change; Assabiyah, can further inform collaborative work and group cohesion on theoretical and practical grounds as well.

Yet the organizational value created by this collaborative action research will be the submission of a proposal to launch a course titled "*Flipped Learning and Coaching Self-Paced Learners*" in the undergraduate programs at Faculty of Education. Through the co-construction of knowledge between the co-researchers, we consider the way in which the reflections of the 'lived experiences' of participants can inform a renewed institutional policy strategy within the redesign and management of undergraduate courses. Because, although the blended learning approaches and newly emerging e-learning options have been on the rise (especially after the COVID-19

experience), the education faculties in Turkish context are firmly stuck to conventional "classroom management course" in their teacher training programs and curricula. This is clearly evident in the recently "renewed" versions of undergraduate teacher training programs designed by the Higher Education Council (YÖK) as well (YÖK, 2018). I hope that this particular study, as a good practice, may also serve as an awareness spark in the top policy making circles.

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