

Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats of the Implementation of Moodle in EFL Flipped Classroom Courses

Hassina Kalla

University of Larbi Ben M'hidi. Oum El Bouaghi(Algeria),Faculty
of Letters and Languages, DÉCLIC (Laboratory of Didactics,
Enunciation, Corpus, Linguistics and Cultural Interaction)
hassina.kalla@univ-oeb.dz

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Abstract:

This study investigates the perceptions of undergraduate EFL students from five Algerian universities namely: Batna, Constantine, Khenchela, Oran, and Ouargla regarding the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) associated with the use of the Moodle platform as an educational tool for flipped learning. Qualitative research methodology was employed, utilizing focus group which consists of nine undergraduate students as the data collection method. The focus group discussions were structured around the components of SWOT analysis. The findings of this study confirmed the ill- advised decision to choose Moodle as an educational learning. Besides, the discussions highlighted the unexperienced practices in delivering the lessons as far as Flipped Classroom (FC) models are concerned.

Keywords: EFL, flipped learning, Moodle platform, SWOT analysis

1. Introduction

The era of technology boom has significantly affected all aspects of life in a way or another, education is no exception. Unexpected circumstances like COVID-19 confirmed the urgent need to transform the traditional classrooms depending on chalk and board delivered in physical mode to online classrooms integrating technology based on interaction and collaboration. The varied electronic devices and educational platforms available offer multiple possibilities for both teachers and students. This shift in education is not merely keeping up with the latest technological innovations, it is

also about making informed decisions about the suitable platform to hybrid education.

Flipped Classroom (FC) has gained prominence as a common ground where both traditional classrooms and online instructions are combined to make learning more student-centered, promote critical thinking and maximize student-teacher face-to-face interaction.

A well-stated problem plays a major role in building a well-written research (Kothari, 2004). In the case of our study, the researcher, as a PhD student, has noticed that all the post-graduate courses programmed by the Higher Ministry of Education depend on two platforms mainly Moodle. Finding some difficulties in using this platform and the complaints of most PhD students around about this platform and why it has been chosen without referring to the students' needs and preferences. This latter encouraged the researcher to discuss Moodle as a potential learning platform with some undergraduate students. Surprisingly, the majority are acquainted with it but still unable to use it effectively.

For this reason, and after studying the literature (see the Literature Review section), the real problem is not only in the platform itself but also for what it is used for. That is to say, Moodle is a tool to flip the classroom. The literature acknowledges this platform especially studies conducted outside Algeria (Heredia Ponce et al., 2022; Mutambik, 2018; Vuong, 2023). However, the majority of them questioned the way it is used to flip the classroom (Wang & Qi, 2018). In Algeria, studies conducted in big cities generated positive impressions about Moodle (Sebbah, 2019) while those conducted in small cities proved the opposite (Ghounane & Rabahi, 2023). To clarify the ambiguity of the effectiveness of using Moodle not only as a technological tool in teaching- learning process but also as a tool to flip the classroom, this study is conducted to get closer to students' voices, experiences, and prospects about Moodle platform in flipping EFL classrooms.

To solve the problem, the study should have a clear aim to orient the research as a whole. The study aspires to fulfil one sole aim

which is generating as much as possible of students' perspectives on the use of Moodle as a technological aid to flip EFL classrooms.

Nunan considers "The minimum requirement for an activity to be considered research is that it contains three components: a question, data analysis and interpretation" (1992, p. 211). This study aspires to answer the following question:

To what extent is Moodle platform effective in flipping EFL classrooms from Algerian students' perspectives?

2. Literature Review

2.1. Background of the Study

2.1.1. Flipped Classroom

As mentioned earlier, the idea of flipping the classroom is based on student-centered approach reflecting the core principles of interacting classrooms. That is to say, the teacher is not the sage on the stage as in the transmittal model, but rather the guide on the side (King, 1993). This can be attained through developing the higher order thinking processes namely: analyzing, synthesizing, and evaluating. The article written by Alison King inspired the other researchers and among them John Wesley Baker (2000) who introduces FC to link both educational and technological aspects. This new model attempts to introduce knowledge through educational platforms and make use of the remaining time inside the classroom for more engagement and collaboration. FC was realized coincidentally: "What started as one man tutoring his cousin has grown into a more than 150-person organization" (Khan Academy, 2023, About section). This academy is a virtual school covering varied subjects such as: math, science, languages, and even life skills like Artificial Intelligence (AI) for education. FC means converting the tasks: "that which is traditionally done in class is now done at home, and that which is traditionally done as homework is now completed in class" (Bergmann & Sams, 2012, p. 13). This means that "events that have

traditionally taken place inside the classroom now take place outside the classroom and vice versa” (Lage et al., 2000, p. 32).

Teachers might flip their classrooms for varied reasons. Firstly, FC (Bergmann & Sams, 2012) speaks the language of the digital era generation. Secondly, it gives sick or busy students the chance to reach all the missed courses. Besides, struggling students can get the assistance of the teacher and the classmates. Moreover, it augments interaction and strengthens the relationship between teachers and students. Finally, it guides even parents to what and how their children learn. These are few reasons included in Bergmann and Sams’ book to persuade and guide teachers to flip their classrooms (2012).

In the traditional model, the first 25 minutes of the lesson are devoted to warm- up task and discussing the homework. After that, half an hour is spent in lecturing new content. Finally, the last 20 minutes are devoted for guided and independent practice. In the flipped model (Bergmann & Sams, 2012), the first ten minutes are for answering students’ questions and clarifying the misconceptions students may encounter while watching the video. The rest of the lesson is devoted for practice such as problem- solving tasks.

Flipped Classroom can take diverse models. Each model is implemented according to the nature of the course, the teaching style, the students’ interaction and educational materials. These models limit the role of the teacher as a lecturer as much as possible for more centric classes. These are six models published by the University of Texas at El Paso (*Flipping the Class Models*, n.d.):

1. The Standard Inverted Classroom
2. The Discussion- Oriented Flipped Classroom
3. The Demonstration- Focused Flipped Classroom
4. The Group- Based Flipped Classroom
5. The Virtual Flipped Classroom
6. Flipping the Teacher
7. “Fail, Flip, Fix, and Feed” Model. The seventh model is proposed recently by Kapur et al. (2022). This model is based on problem-solving as an active learning strategy.

2.1.2. Moodle Platform

Learning Management System (LMS) is an educational software used to administer varied courses to students. The number of countries depending on LMS in their educational systems is growing day by day. This is because of learning becomes more flexible “not restricted to the classroom and students study at their own pace” (Hurix, 2017, para. 3). There are several types of LMS available. Moodle (Modular Object- Oriented Dynamic Learning Environment) is the most popular platform with over 213 million users worldwide from varied types of organisations (*About Moodle - MoodleDocs*, n.d. ; Hurix, 2023). It provides for its users “ a single robust, secure, and integrated system” (*About Moodle - MoodleDocs*, n.d., para. 1). It was developed by Martin Dougiamas in 2002 (Hurix, 2017). Moodle can be used for diverse functions such as: online course development, product and service launches, hiring, recruitment and interview process, training and management, and others. It gained trust from popular institutions and organisations for instance: Shell, London School of Economics, State University of New York, and Microsoft and the Open University.

Moodle has multiple of advantages that encourage both teachers and students to depend on. First, it is designed to support both teaching and learning in a collaborative atmosphere and a student-centric tools. That is because it implemented the principles of social constructionist pedagogy (*About Moodle - MoodleDocs*, n.d.). Learning becomes more personalized in a way that Moodle puts the learner in an active status learning at their own pace within an interactive environment. Besides, Moodle is a flexible platform which can be customized and tailored to students’ needs. Its flexibility extends to its tool- set to support blended and online learning. Some core features can be enabled or disabled according to the nature of the course and the learners. It can integrate some external collaborative tools such as forums, wikis, chats, and blogs. This can help teachers to create online- learning communities which makes learning more collaborating, engaging, and fun. In addition, these features play a

significant role in the assessment procedure. It helps teachers to track students' work effectively to monitor their learning and provide feedback to improve their outcomes.

2.2. Previous Studies

Integrating technology in teaching and learning foreign languages has a significant influence. It increases the scope of teaching, provides quality learning materials, and creating autonomy of learning (Ammanni & Aparanjani, 2016; Mutambik, 2018). A study conducted in Saudi Arabia (Mutambik, 2018) on the perceptions of both students and teachers regarding the role of e- learning in EFL classes generates positive attitudes and highlights the opportunities e-learning provides for fostering students' skills especially listening and speaking. However, comparing the views of students and teachers, it demonstrates that the former seemed more skillful than the latter about such technology. Mutambik (2018) highlights the lack of the requisite knowledge on the part of the teachers to bring together the two pedagogies: traditional and e-learning.

A systematic review (Heredia Ponce et al., 2022) was carried out to determine the level of expansion of the FC in language teaching focusing on the years of the COVID-19 health pandemic. These studies have been developed more in the Asian region and the majority of the articles were published in the period of COVID-19, aimed at L2 teaching, specifically English. The study shows that FC improves motivation, collaboration, and interaction in learning. Put it simply, FC focuses not only on the end- product but also on the process. Heredia Ponce et al. (2022) suggest more qualitative studies highlighting students' attitudes and expectations towards this methodology, such as a focus group.

Following the same thread, Wang and Qi (2018) advocate the efficacy of FC in education but raise the issue about the kinds of support that students would need in learning outside class. The study findings highlight the necessity, benefits, and challenges of providing learning support outside class in the FC context. It mentions three

kinds of support: cognitive, affective, and learning strategy support. Each support is explained thoroughly and suggest the appropriate technology intervention that can be possibly implemented.

During the pandemic, universities all over the world found it inevitable to switch to FC models. As mentioned earlier, many studies were conducted during this period for many reasons. Maulana and Lintangari (2021) address the voice of the Indonesian students toward the use of Moodle in EFL classes. The questionnaire results were positive and confirmed the significant role of such platforms especially for sharing materials. Similarly, Vuong (2023) investigated Vietnamese students' perceptions of Moodle in flipped English grammar classes and got the same positive perceptions.

In the Algerian context, Sebbah conducted a quasi-experimental study (2019) investigating the impact of flipped learning on developing Algerian first year EFL degree students' reading ability at the university of Algiers 2 as well as exploring their perceptions of using flipped learning. The study depended on the Moodle online learning platform which contains instructional videos, quizzes and reading assignments. The findings reveal that flipped learning has significantly a positive impact on developing students' reading ability. Moreover, students expressed positive perceptions of using flipped learning to develop their reading skill. However, Ghounane and Rabahi (2023) though acknowledged the positive impact of using Moodle on academic achievements, they found that students had difficulties using this platform due to many factors such as: the sudden shift to online learning, lack of ICT materials, network problems, lack of knowledge, and the lack of interaction with teachers.

3. Methods and Materials

This study is an exploratory formulative research design which focuses on discovering ideas and insights (Kothari, 2004). It implements a qualitative research method and surveys the experiences of the participants about using Moodle platform to flip their EFL

classrooms. A qualitative research seeks to visualize the holistic picture for deeper understanding of the study rather than breaking it down into variables (Ary et al., 2014). Besides, experience survey is based on “the survey of people who have had practical experiences with the problem to be studied” (Kothari, 2004, p. 36). As mentioned earlier, Heredia Ponce et al.(2022) suggest to conduct more qualitative studies focusing on students’ perceptions about FC.

3.1. Participants

A volunteer sampling (Cohen et al., 2007) is conducted to include nine undergraduate students from five different Algerian universities accepted in the study but two were excluded because they were unable to join all the prearranged discussions. Only seven participants managed to join all the assigned discussion meetings. These participants have willingly responded to be part of the study after a post on one of the popular groups of undergraduate students on Facebook. Although the volunteer sampling is non-probable sample which means that it is non- representative and seeks no generalization beyond the sample itself, it is less expensive and less complicated to set up (Cohen et al., 2007). Participants are given pseudo names in order to protect their anonymity.

Table 1. The Participants in the Study Sample

Pseudo	University and Specialty	Level
St1	Mostafa Ben Boulaid Batna2/ Linguistics	Master 1
St2	Mostafa Ben Boulaid Batna2/ Linguistics	Master 1
St3	Mostafa Ben Boulaid Batna2/ Didactics	Master 1
St4	Ouargla university/ Didactics	Master 2
St5	The Teacher's Training College of Constantine (ENSC)	ENSC fifth grade

St6	Abbess Laghrour University of Khenchela/ Didactics	Master 2
St7	Mohamed Ben Ahmed 2 University of Oran/ Applied Linguistics	Master 1

3. 2. Research Instrument

This interpretative study used the focus group discussions as the sole data gathering tool. Elicitation techniques are the most frequently data collection tools used in second language acquisition research. These techniques are based on a stimulus for example: a picture, a diagram, a standardized test, a questionnaire, a survey, or an interview (Nunan, 1992). Before starting the daily discussions, the researcher published a consent that all the participants agreed up on. This consent includes the title of the study, the researcher information, the ethical and confidential aspect and the purpose of the study. The focus group was held on a Messenger group created for this purpose named Focus Group Discussions and took a week of daily discussions revolving and evolving around four main themes that reflect the SWOT analysis which is used to lead and orient the discussions. The themes are: Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT). The discussions were either written or spoken using messages or audios. Three languages were permitted to be used: Arabic, English, or French.

Two factors can cause bias in the discussions of the focus group: the relationship between the participants themselves and with the interviewer. Besides, the unstructured interview is unpredictable in this case. Participants can affect the course of the prearranged questions (Nunan, 1992). For this reason, the interviewer has chosen a volunteer sampling to avoid any kind of acquaintances among participants. Additionally, the researcher used a semi- structured interview in a way that prevent any deviation from the main purpose of the study. In addition, the interviewer should consider both the

format of the questions and the mode of the discussions. And as for the case of the focus group interview, the main interaction that yields the data is that between the participants (Cohen et al., 2007). Heredia Ponce et al. (2022) in their systematic review suggest the use of focus group discussions to yield detailed data about the attitudes and perspectives of students towards FC.

3. 3. Research Procedure

This study used SWOT analysis in interpreting data. SWOT stands for: Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats. Firstly, Strengths are internal to the environment analyzed represented in its resources and capabilities. They should be realistic. They should answer questions related to the environment advantages and strengths for example: good reputation among users, resources, assets, people...etc. Secondly, Weaknesses are internal aspects that may be considered as barriers to achieve effective results, limitations, defects of the unit studies. They should be truthful. They should answer questions related to the environment disadvantages and weaknesses for example: gaps in capabilities, system effectiveness, financial, deadlines...etc. Thirdly, Opportunities are any favourable situation present now or in the future in the external environment (Keeley, n.d.). These can be: unfulfilled customer need, arrival of new technologies, global influences, and so on. Finally, Threats are the external force that hinders the attainment of the desired advantages. They highlight the existing obstacle be it: financial, political, technological, and so on.

SWOT analysis has multiple of benefits. It is simple, flexible, low in cost, and quick. It can be achieved through conducting focus group sessions or planning meetings. After the focus group discussion and gathering data about SWOT, these findings are categorized into themes which are prioritized five ideas per category. They are later documented in a table manifesting two categories of information:

internal trends (strengths and weaknesses) and external trends (opportunities and threats) (Keeley, n.d.) .

4. Results

The present section deals with the interpretation of the Focus Group Discussions (FGD) with seven volunteer students from five different universities. These seven students are of varied levels: Master one and Master two. The researcher created a messenger group in the first week of September 2023. The FGD include 11 questions (see Appendix) divided into three sub- sections, dealing with:

1. Probe Questions: three general and short questions about the frequency of the use of Moodle platform, the number of subjects use it, and which part of the lesson is flipped.
2. Follow- Up Questions: detailed questions about the four components of the SWOT analysis: Strenghths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats.
3. Exit Questions: a concluding and free question for any additional information.

As far as the first section is concerned, the interviewees were firstly asked about the frequency of their logging in the Moodle platform. Five students revealed that they logged in to the Moodle platform whenever their teachers informed them of a new lesson on the site. Some expressions from their answers are displayed below in participants' words:

St1 and st3: *I don't have a specific time, it depends on our study schedule.*

St2 and st5: *I log in to the Moodle platform once per day to check if the teacher adds lessons or exercises especially when teachers informed us that there would be a PDF posted on the platform that day or evening. Other than that, I do not use the platform much.*

St6: *I rarely visit the Moodle platform due to the poor internet connection speed and also our department had created classes on another platform too "Classroom App".*

Only two students check the Moodle platform regularly and willingly:

St5: *I do that very often.*

St7: *I am a curious student and next year I will be a Master two student. That's why, I regularly log in to the platform even in summer to check the upcoming lessons posted there.*

Concerning the second question, it was a sentence completion about the number of subjects using this platform (see Appendix/ Q 2). Surprisingly, most of the students stated that just few subjects depended on this platform and the teachers mostly share pdfs only as they explained in their own words:

St1: *Only ESP module uses Moodle which is one out of ten.*

St2 and st5: *Not all the subjects only few of them (less than five out of ten).*

St6: *Most subjects restricted its use to sharing pdfs. Only one teacher shared his YouTube channel.*

Two students only revealed that the majority teachers depended on the Moodle platform:

St3 and st4: *Most of them.*

The last question is about the model of flipped classroom implemented. As stated in the literature review, there are multiple of flipped classroom models and each one is constructed differently. Even the roles of the teacher and the students determine the model followed. Three choices are provided to help students answer the question but the question is an open one and requires students' own perception. All of them agreed on the use of PDF lectures on the platform and finishing the activities in the class with the exception of ICT teachers who used videos. These are the students' answers:

St1 and st2: *Some of my teachers share the lectures as PDFs (they are so long and detailed). Others give us just exercises to solve them later in the classroom.*

St3 and st6: *Yeah! They were just PDF lectures. Only ICT teacher shared videos and we were studying in class too.*

St4, st5, and st7: *Well! They only keep lecturing (St5: LOL). They only share PDF lectures, no activities, nothing else.*

As far as the second section is concerned, the interviewees were asked seven detailed questions (see Appendix) to assist the researcher to generate as many views as possible. Four themes characterize this section based on the SWOT analysis. Firstly, students were asked about the strengths of the using Moodle as a flipped classroom platform. Students were given three aspects to reflect up on: learning process, motivation, and collaboration. These are the main answers:

St1, st4 and st7: *It is not complicated and easy to use. Anyone can manage that.*

St2, st3, and st5: *I like one characteristic which is the availability of this platform wherever and whenever especially for those who have unexpected circumstances or working and studying at the same time (St2 told us the story of her colleague who works and studies and how Moodle paved her the way to do them both). However, I (St2, st3 and st5) agree with St6, Google Classroom is much better.*

Unexpectedly, this part which is supposed to shed light on the strengths of Moodle use in flipped classroom turned out to state some drawbacks by st5 and st6:

St5: *although Moodle helped students during COVID- 19 and was much better than sending and receiving emails to teachers or their delegates with the multiple technical issues like finding them in the spam, I think it is not enough now especially for majors which require more practice than theory. In terms of interaction, Moodle lacks this feature because students cannot interact and send messages to one another. Teachers used to write announcements as a message but with no option to comment on it. Unlike Moodle, Google classroom is much easier and practical in terms of comments and posting*

questions. In terms of collaboration and communication, there is no communication. Moodle should be used with other apps like Google Classroom, Google Meet, or Zoom where the oral sessions were held.

St6: Personally, I think that Moodle platform has no pros, from the way it is designed to the way in which lessons are presented on it.

The second part of this second section is about weaknesses in spite of some being mentioned earlier. Students were asked two questions about the difficulties faced on Moodle in the flipped classroom and the technical issues they encountered. Most agreed on the less practical design of the Moodle platform stating:

St1: I think Moodle is boring compared to more modern learning platforms like Google Classroom.

St3: I hate every time I log in to my Moodle account, I have to use my email and password provided by the university. I so often make mistakes.

St4 and st5: One of the drawbacks of this platform is the lack of notifications.

St6: I agree with st5 about the lack of interaction between students and their teachers. It is also impractical. Unlike Google Classroom, we receive no notifications as st4 and st5 mentioned. Anytime teachers post something, we are supposed to check from time to time to see if we have new courses. Besides, one of the biggest cons is that there are too many steps to reach the courses. Taking the poor internet connection speed into consideration, it really kills the students' motivation to keep up with their lessons.

However, one student, even being in agreement with the aforementioned drawbacks, highlighted the unwillingness to change on the part of students. She explains her point of view:

St2: First of all, I think that we "as learners" did not give great importance to these platforms honestly. Because we were accustomed

to the traditional method of teaching. The problem may be in us (LOL) and I have noticed that we use this platform or others because we are obliged to do so. I cannot deny the problem of connectivity that decreases the motivation in learners. We need a platform with a motivating design, clear steps and strong internet.

The third part of this second section is about opportunities. Two questions were asked about the way the teacher can help in designing effective courses on Moodle and what features might be used. These are students' answers:

St1: Teachers can use videos and more interactive techniques like live discussions.

St2, st5, st6 and st7: Teachers do not make use of all Moodle features. They just post PDF lectures and we read them. They should discuss with us in the classroom what they have posted, checking our understanding in the case they gave us practice. They should help us with pictures, videos, maps and not just PDF lectures, lectures, lectures...because most learners are visual. Besides, we have to create an interactive atmosphere on the platform like the one in the classroom. However, teachers do not make use of all options available.

St3: Teachers are like us, they are obliged to use Moodle and once a professor teacher told us that she didn't like using these stuff. We need a more interactive site where we can have online meetings and join group discussions.

All of them agreed that teachers neglected the most important features of this platform that resemble the interaction patterns among all the participants in the teaching learning process. They explained that students are of varied types which means diverse materials should be implemented.

The last part of this SWOT analysis section is about threats. Two questions were asked about the barriers that students might

confront on this platform while flipping the classroom. This means the obstacles in the lessons themselves and the platform too.

St1: Actually, I didn't find any barriers. I log in the morning, no connection issues.

St2: I sometimes find myself logged out although I didn't do that myself. Besides, there are some connection issues.

St3: I had some connection speed issues because I used to log in most the evening in the dorm.

St4: Well! Yes, it happened once during a test which was supposed to be on that platform yet it became unreachable.

St5, St6 and st7: Well the main barrier was the connection speed. The time of logging in is crucial; connection speed is more convenient in the morning than in the evening.

Concerning the last section, it consists of one exiting question (see Appendix). Students were given an opportunity to add anything they found positive or even negative about implementing Moodle platform in flipped classroom. Students expressed the usefulness of using technology in learning especially the highly interactive platforms. They acknowledged the positive effects of Moodle on the teaching learning process. However, all of them advised teachers to benefit from all the available options on this platform especially those that may contribute to the interaction and cooperation among students. They recommended the use of varied materials such as: pictures, videos, maps, live meetings and so on for more effective learning.

The role of SWOT analysis is to gather data from the environment and classify it into internal and external issues. This analysis can assist in determining the existence of any obstacle that may hinder the desired achievements (Keeley, n.d.). We can sum up the findings of the second section, SWOT analysis, in the following table:

Table 2. SWOT Analysis Data

	Helpful to achieving the objective	To Harmful achieving the objective
Internal origin	✓ Easy to use. ✓ Available wherever and whenever. ✓ Build a good relationship with teachers.	• Lack of interaction and collaboration. • Boring. • Lectures as PDFs. • Lack of motivation.
External origin	➤ The need of more interactive platform. ➤ Teachers should make use of all Moodle features. ➤ Include videos, pictures, maps, online meetings, and group discussions.	○ Poor internet connection speed. ○ Too many steps to reach the course. ○ Lack of notifications. ○ Logging issues.

5. Discussion and analysis of results

FGD are the only data- gathering tool used in this study. This tool focuses on group interaction and allows for data to be generated collectively (Eeuwijk & Angehrn, 2017). It assisted the researcher to elicit students’ attitudes and experiences towards implementing Moodle platform in the flipped classroom. FGD consisted of 11 questions distributed into three varied sections.

Concerning the first section, the students were asked three questions as a warming up to the next section. The first question was about their frequency of logging in to the Moodle platform (see appendix). The majority of students (five out of seven) admit that they log in to the Moodle platform because they are obliged to do that to check the posted lessons and activities. Two of them reveal that they use this platform in a daily basis. The two students admit that they were curious and enthusiastic about learning. This means that the personality of the student and being internally motivated play an important role in dealing with hybrid learning. The second question is about the number of subjects implementing this platform while

flipping the course. Surprisingly, five students admit that few subjects depend on Moodle and they share only PDFs lectures. However, two of them state that most of the subjects they study use Moodle. They agreed on the use of PDFs lectures only. Noticeably, ICT was the only subject to use videos while flipping the classroom as two students stated. This means that the competency of the teacher in using technological devices is crucial in creating effective videos in flipped classrooms. The last question was about the part of the lesson that is flipped. This question aims to discover what model of flipped classroom is used and how. All students agree on the sharing of PDF lectures before the class with some activities which they would correct in the class. This reflects the lack of knowledge and practice on the part of teachers on how to flip the classroom and what models should be implemented for each subject and lesson. To conclude, few subjects implemented technology to flip their classes without asking the students about the platform they prefer. Besides, and most importantly, the way the classes were flipped in our case didn't follow the core rule of the flipped classroom which is the sharing of videos created by the teachers themselves or from other sites. Using PDF lectures proved to be a demotivating technique as all the participants admitted in the FGD.

Concerning the second section, the researcher attempted to elicit students' attitudes, experiences, and prospects on learning via Moodle. Four themes oriented this section based on SWOT analysis: Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats. Students were firstly asked to state positive aspects of learning via Moodle platform. Remarkably, there is an agreement on how this platform helps students especially those who work or have certain circumstances to study at their pace because it is available wherever and whenever. Thus, students highlighted the supremacy of FC over traditional method. However, all the students revealed that most of the lessons were flipped using solely PDF lectures. This mainly led to demotivate them and caused a kind of boring atmosphere for some students. What made all the participants agree on the lack of motivation also is the deactivating of features that support interaction and collaboration such

as: commenting on posts, contacting other students, chat- box and others. This explains why the majority of students in section one admitted logging in to Moodle just to find lessons. To overcome the weaknesses of this virtual platform, students suggest the possibility of activating some main features that encourage interaction among students and with the teachers too. Students aspire for the possibility of supporting this platform with other interacting applications like Google Meet or Zoom. This seems possible according to a study conducted (Boyd & Gallai, 2023) in Italy which states how a modified version of Moodle called Everywhere, which was created to facilitate learning in the context of EFL, could successfully integrate Zoom for streaming and video collaboration. Consequently, educators could host meetings with up to 300 participants and had access to unlimited editable whiteboards. Furthermore, students could create meetings with their peers with a 40-minute time limit. The incorporation of Moodle into Everywhere learning platform with the addition of Zoom has led to the development of an interactive platform for both students and teachers. The Algerian students in this study counted a multiple of technical and external threats. Some of them reflect the nature of the country itself in the poor internet connection speed. Others reflect issues related to the platform itself namely: lack of notifications, logging issues, and the many steps to reach the course. This led to weaken motivation in the first place. To conclude, the SWOT analysis unveiled the positive and negative aspects of Moodle platform in TEFL. Being easy to use and available, Moodle still lacks some interaction features that can strengthen more the relationships among students and between their teachers. This may well give them extra opportunities to practise English in real situations.

The last section was an exit one consisting of one question (see Appendix). Students were given an opportunity to add anything they find positive or even negative about using Moodle in FC. Students acknowledged the benefits of Moodle platform in facilitating learning. However, they aspire for more interactive space that imitates to some extent their real classroom environment.

In conclusion, FGD could generate a considerable number of students' perspectives about Moodle use in FC. The students' answers confirmed the research problem and answered the question of the study. Moodle can be a highly effective learning platform if the universities personalize it according to the needs of the students and the nature of the subject to be taught. Teachers on their part should make use of all the available options and features especially those that may help rise interaction and collaboration among students. Strengths should be maintained, opportunities should be aspired for, and weaknesses and threats should be overcome.

6. Conclusion

In conclusion, this research highlights the practicality and user-friendliness of the Moodle platform for educational purposes. However, the findings suggest that many educators are underutilizing the full potential of Moodle, particularly the interactive features that can enhance the learning experience. To optimize the platform's effectiveness, it is imperative to tailor its design to individual subjects and consider the integration of live meeting features. Additionally, this study reveals a concerning knowledge gap among teachers regarding the implementation of the flipped classroom model, indicating a need for professional development and training initiatives to empower educators in adopting this innovative pedagogy. Thus, the research underscores the importance of not only having the right tools but also ensuring educators are equipped with the knowledge and skills necessary to harness these tools for effective teaching and learning.

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Appendix

Focus Group Discussion (FGD):

The Utilisation of Moodle in EFL Flipped Classroom Courses

Dear, students.

You are kindly requested to participate in a discussion in this focus group with other undergraduate students from other universities about The Utilisation of MOODLE in EFL Flipped Classroom Courses. This discussion is moderated by Mrs. Kalla Hassina of the University of Larbi Ben M'hidi - Oum El Bouaghi.

The questions you are going to answer are going to be used for research purpose only. Your answers will be kept confidential. Thank you very much for your help.

Section One: Probe Questions

1. How often do you log in to Moodle platform during the period of studying per day?
2. Do all subjects you study utilise Moodle? Finish this sentence: out of
3. How does your teacher (s) flip the course? You can choose from the list below:
 - a- Flip the first part: lecture presentation.
 - b- Flip the middle part: work/ practice.
 - c- Flip the last part: production.

Section Two: Follow- Up Questions

Strengths (S):

4. What are the best features of Moodle in your EFL flipped classroom experience? In terms of:
 - a- Learning process
 - b- Motivation and interaction with course materials and resources.
 - c- Collaboration and communication with peers and instructors.

Weaknesses (W):

5. What are the difficulties you have encountered while studying on Moodle as far as EFL flipped courses are concerned?
6. Have you faced any technical issues with Moodle that affected your learning experience?

Opportunities (O):

7. How would you like the teacher help you on Moodle?

8. Are there any features on Moodle the teacher can use to help you learn more effectively?

Threats (T):

9. Have you experienced any barriers in utilizing Moodle for EFL flipped classroom courses?
10. Are there external factors, such as inadequate access to technology or internet connectivity, that pose threats to the effective use of Moodle?

Section Three: Exit Questions

11. Is there anything else you would like to say about Moodle platform as an educational tool?