

# EFL Students' Perceptions of Activeness During the Implementation of Flipped Learning Approach at a Colombian University.<sup>1</sup>

Percepciones de Estudiantes de Inglés como Lengua Extranjera Sobre su *Rol Activo* durante la Implementación del Enfoque de Aprendizaje Invertido en una Universidad Colombiana.

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## Abstract

Flipped Learning is a pedagogical approach that provides students with more time in class to practice or to engage in dynamic tasks to promote active learning. Although the Flipped Learning research has become increasingly popular, limited research has been conducted in Colombia exploring students' perceptions of this approach. This action research was carried out to explore students' perceptions of *activeness* during the implementation of the Flipped Learning approach. The participants were 84 students from a state university in Colombia who were taking English as a complementary subject as part of their undergraduate degree programs. Students were exposed to this approach during a 16-week period in which they completed different pre-class, during-class, and post-class activities. Data collection instruments were designed based on the first three pillars of the approach: *Flexible Environment, Learning Culture, and Intentional Content*. Data were collected through immediate feedback, an online questionnaire, and a focus group interview, and were then analyzed in

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the light of these three pillars. The data indicated that students felt they were more engaged, their voices were heard, they felt increased ownership of their learning, and demonstrated a positive opinion towards collaborative work.

*Key words:* Flipped Learning, Active Learning, Activeness, EFL, perceptions.

### Resumen

El aprendizaje invertido es un enfoque pedagógico que proporciona a los estudiantes más tiempo en clase para practicar o participar en tareas dinámicas con el fin de promover el aprendizaje activo. Aunque la investigación sobre el aprendizaje invertido se ha vuelto cada vez más popular, se han realizado pocas investigaciones en Colombia que exploran las percepciones de los estudiantes sobre este enfoque. Esta investigación-acción se llevó a cabo con el fin de explorar las percepciones de los estudiantes sobre qué tan activos estuvieron ellos durante la implementación del enfoque de aprendizaje invertido. Los participantes fueron 84 estudiantes de una universidad estatal en Colombia que tomaban inglés como materia complementaria como parte de sus programas de pregrado. Los estudiantes estuvieron expuestos a este enfoque durante un período de 16 semanas en el que completaron diferentes actividades previas a la clase, durante la clase y después de la clase. Los instrumentos de recopilación de datos se diseñaron basados en los tres primeros pilares del enfoque (Entorno flexible, Cultura de aprendizaje y Contenido intencional). Los datos se recopilaban a través de comentarios inmediatos, un cuestionario en línea y una entrevista al grupo de enfoque, y luego se analizaron a la luz de estos tres pilares. Los datos indicaron que los estudiantes sintieron que estaban más comprometidos, se escucharon sus voces, sintieron una mayor apropiación de su aprendizaje y demostraron una opinión positiva hacia el trabajo colaborativo.

*Palabras clave:* Aprendizaje invertido, aprendizaje activo, rol activo, EFL, percepciones.

### Resumo

A aprendizagem invertida é um enfoque pedagógico que proporciona aos estudantes mais tempo em sala de aula, para praticar ou participar em tarefas dinâmicas, com o fim de promover a aprendizagem ativa. Mesmo que a pesquisa sobre a aprendizagem invertida seja cada vez mais popular, se tem realizado poucas pesquisas na Colômbia, que exploram as percepções dos estudantes sobre este enfoque. Esta pesquisa-ação foi realizada com o fim de explorar as percepções dos estudantes sobre que tão ativos eles estiveram durante a implementação do enfoque de aprendizagem invertido. Os participantes foram 84 estudantes de uma universidade estadual na Colômbia, que estudavam inglês como matéria complementar, como parte dos seus programas de graduação. Os estudantes estiveram expostos a este enfoque durante um período de 16 semanas no que completaram diferentes atividades prévias à aula, durante a aula e depois da aula. Os instrumentos de recopilación de dados foram

desenhados baseados nos três primeiros pilares do enfoque (Entorno flexível, Cultura de aprendizagem e Conteúdo intencional). Os dados se recopilaram através de comentários imediatos, um questionário em linha e uma entrevista ao grupo de enfoque, e logo foram analisados tendo em vista esses três pilares. Os dados indicaram que os estudantes sentiram que estavam mais comprometidos, escutaram-se suas vozes, sentiram uma maior apropriação da sua aprendizagem e demonstraram uma opinião positiva com relação ao trabalho colaborativo.

*Palavras chave:* Aprendizagem invertida, aprendizagem ativa, papel ativo, EFL, percepções.

## Introduction

In the field of English as a Foreign Language (EFL), research indicates that the manner classes are taught may affect students' interest and motivation (Brown, 2008; Kim, 2008). Nowadays, teachers are increasingly aware that technology can provide them with virtual spaces to deliver content to students, allowing them to access it anytime and anywhere. Moreover, technology may also help teachers make their practices more student-centered.

Many scholars have called for teachers to move from a predominately teacher-centered approach to a more student-centered one (Bergmann & Sams, 2012; Brown, 2008; Weimer, 2002). As one way of facilitating this transition towards more student-centered practices, some educators now strongly advocate the pedagogical approach of "Flipped Learning". According to The Flipped Learning Network (2014), Flipped Learning is:

a pedagogical approach in which direct instruction moves from the group learning space to the individual learning space and the resulting group space is transformed into a dynamic, interactive learning environment where the educator guides students as they apply concepts and engage creatively in the subject matter (par. 3).

Before 2014, the terms Flipped Classroom (FC) and Flipped Learning (FL) tended to be used interchangeably. The term Flipped Classroom is understood as a model of blended learning in which students watch videos or read texts before the class and then do homework during the classroom time (Bergmann & Sams, 2014). On the other hand, Flipped Learning is a pedagogical approach that allows teachers to implement different teaching methodologies in their classrooms, for example combining Flipped Learning with project-based learning, tasked-based, inquiry-based or any other active learning methodology, in which student-centered learning spaces are provided to participants. It is important to recognize that many teachers might have been "flipping" their classes (delivering content to study at home and doing homework during classroom time), but this does not necessarily mean that Flipped Learning is happening. This is the reason why the Flipped Learning Network (FLN) composed a definition for this term in 2014, establishing four "pillars" (*Flexible Environment, Learning Culture, Intentional Content, and Professional Educator*), which, according to the FLN, teachers must include in their practices to engage in Flipped Learning.

Teachers make decisions about the activities that students might enjoy, the ones that might be more effective for communicative purposes, and those that could meet the needs of all students in the classroom. However, students' perceptions when making these decisions are rarely taken into consideration (Barkhuizen, 1998). For that reason, this study intends to explore students' perceptions of *activeness* during the implementation of the Flipped Learning approach in a Colombian state university EFL course and, by doing this, this study will contribute towards addressing this gap in the literature found in Colombia.

### Literature review

Flipped learning research has increased over the past 10 years (Talbert, 2018) and it is growing in relation to the field of English as a Foreign Language. Despite this, studies relating Flipped Learning and EFL in Colombia, where this study took place, are limited.

### Flipped Learning Approach

A group of experienced educators from the Flipped Learning Network (2014) identified four key features or “pillars” that, according to them, allow Flipped Learning to occur. These are *Flexible Environment*, *Learning Culture*, *Intentional Content*, and *Professional Educator*, this study will focus on the first three since they are most directly related to students.

*Flexible Environment* highlights the importance of creating a flexible atmosphere in which students are able to choose *when* and *where* to learn, and the flexibility when it comes to students' pace of learning. *Learning Culture* implies a deliberate shift from a teacher-centered classroom to a student-centered approach, where in-class time is dedicated towards exploring topics in greater depth and creating richer active learning opportunities. Finally, *Intentional Content* relates to how teachers determine what to teach and what material students explore on their own. The purpose of these pillars is to maximize classroom time in order to adopt various methods of instruction such as active learning strategies, peer instruction, and problem-based learning among others, depending on the level of the students and the specific subject matter.

In Colombia, relatively few studies have been carried out on Flipped Learning in the field of EFL, with the exception of the recent works by Buítrago and Díaz (2018), Durán (2018) and Ramirez (2018),

as well as two unpublished master theses, one by Garay and Torregrosa (2016) and the other by Hernandez and Torres (2017). Internationally, we found literature and research studies such Alvarez (2012), Al-Zahrani (2015), Graney (2018), Han (2018), Siegle (2014), Strayer (2012), Tucker (2012), Wargner-Loera (2018), Yeo (2018) and more. The aforementioned studies demonstrate a variety of different ways in which researchers have used the Flipped Learning approach in different EFL contexts. Perhaps the most significant conclusion drawn from all of them is that Flipped Learning is perceived to have a positive impact; for example, in students' motivation, opportunities for formative assessment, flexibility in access to content, and students' autonomy, among others. **Considering the previous contributions from the Flipped Learning approach, this study will add knowledge to the EFL field and moreover to the literature in Colombia in regards to this topic.**

### **Active learning and students' *activeness***

The Flipped Learning Network (2014) suggests that one of the foundations of Flipped Learning is "active learning". According to Prince (2004), active learning occurs when learners are engaged and when the responsibility of learning is placed onto them since students need to cope effectively with high levels of demand using their cognitive, metacognitive and affective strategies (Mizokami, 2018; Rana & Burgin, 2018; Sabin & Olive, 2018)

According to the *Oxford English Dictionary* (online version), *activeness* is defined as "constantly engaged in action." However, Ni'mah (2015) states that *activeness* does not mean that students should be constantly *moving* during the learning process, but rather that students are *engaged* at all times during the learning process. *Activeness* is a component of active learning which, according to Bonwell and Eison (1991), "involves students in doing things and thinking about the things they are doing" (p.2).

In the study conducted by Clark (2015), active learning is related to Flipped Learning in a mathematics class. Another study is that of Roach (2014), which took place in a microeconomics course. Both studies relate how Flipped Learning helps to foster active learning. Finally, the research by Hung (2015) explores how flipping an English language classroom provides students with opportunities to engage in more participation, which is a feature of active learning. The present study aims to enrich this topic area since the literature found on *activeness* in relation to Flipped Learning is scarce within the Colombian literature.

## Students' perceptions of Flipped Learning

A review of the research of Flipped Learning conducted by Bishop and Verleger in 2013 identified eleven previous studies that have explored students' perceptions of Flipped Learning. The main conclusions here were that students generally demonstrated positive perceptions of this approach.

The majority of studies on perceptions of Flipped Learning reported positive perceptions towards the approach which have impacted academic performance, motivation, autonomy and collaborative work; students have found Flipped Learning to be a more enjoyable experience since the approach provides students with more control over their learning, more chances to interact with other students and the teacher, and the positive aspect of exploring content at their own pace (Afrilyasanti, Cahyono, and Astuti, 2016; Baker, 2000; Butt, 2014; Chao, Chen, and Chuang, 2015; Johnson, 2013; Maher, Lipford and Singh, 2013; Mosher, 2016; Tohei, 2018; Roehl, Reddy and Shannon, 2013; Wanner and Palmer, 2015; Zainuddin and Attaran, 2016).

Considering that Flipped Learning is a relatively recent concept in Colombia and educators, around the globe, have researched about it as far back as the late 1990s in their classes (Talbert, 2018), the literature found in Colombia on this topic is growing and this study hopes to contribute to broadening our understanding in terms of students' perceptions of *activeness* during the implementation of a Flipped Learning approach.

## Methodology

The specific research question that motivated this study was: *What are students' perceptions of activeness during the implementation of the Flipped Learning approach?* In the following sections the study carried out based on this question is displayed.

## Methodological approach

In order to address the research question above, this study adopted an action research methodological approach. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007) state 'action research is a small-scale intervention in the functioning of the real world and a close examination of the effects of such intervention.' Our research followed 4 stages: planning (an intervention), acting (carrying out the intervention), observing (the effects of the intervention) and reflecting (Altrichter, Kemmis,

McTaggar & Zuber-Skerritt, 2002). The last stage evaluated the findings and discussed the insights gained by the teacher-researchers as the basis for further action. This approach was suitable for this research project since the main purpose was to explore students' perceptions after a 16-week intervention following the Flipped Learning approach, in the results and discussion section the reflection is displayed in order to add knowledge to the EFL field.

### **Research context**

This research took place at a state university in a medium-sized city in Colombia. English courses in this Colombian state university are a requirement to graduate, but they do not have credits and are not included in the curriculum of each program; therefore, students can register to attend these classes at any time during their undergraduate programs. Students are required to take four to six English levels according to the undergraduate program they are studying. Five different general English courses were chosen for this study in which the Flipped Learning approach was implemented. Each course had a maximum of 35 students registered who take two hours of English class twice a week. Each English level lasts 16 weeks.

The intervention was carried out by two EFL teachers who designed the lessons, materials, homework, and exams based on the textbook *New Cutting Edge Elementary and Pre-Intermediate* (Third Edition), following the three aforementioned pillars of the Flipped Learning approach. Attendance is not compulsory in this course; hence, participation in all stages of the research was voluntary. This could be considered to be one of the limitations of the study, since not all the students who started the courses finished them or were willing to participate in the data collection stage.

### **Participants**

A convenience sample was adopted to carry out this research since the groups selected were the ones the researchers were teaching during that semester. The participants were undergraduate university students from different programs such as Education, Economy, Engineering, Business, Law, Medicine, and Psychology. They were registered on the English I, II, or IV courses, which were assigned to the teacher-researchers, depending on the previous level they had approved. The total number of students registered for the five groups selected were 141. However, 57 stopped attending during the course of the semester.

As a result, only 84 students participated in the final data collection and thus formed part of the final results. The data collection instruments were an online Likert-scale questionnaire, immediate feedback after each class and a focus group interview, they will be explained in detail in the data collection techniques and instruments section.

### Pedagogical intervention

At the university, English teachers are generally encouraged to follow a communicative approach. Hence, the implementation of the Flipped Learning approach for this project was focused on developing communication skills through different pre-class, during-class, and post-class activities. Table 1 summarizes the pedagogical intervention which is explained in more detail in the following paragraphs.

Table 1. Pedagogical intervention timeline.

Week	Intervention	Data collection
Week 1	Introducing students to the course syllabus and methodology.	
Week 2	Introducing students to <i>Playposit</i> and <i>Quizizz</i> .	
Week 3-15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Every week, students watched on a technological device (in their houses, library or at any place) a video on <i>Playposit</i> before coming to class.</li> <li>- Exposing students to the Flipped Learning approach through different active learning strategies (Pair-work, Discussions, Station rotation work, etc.)</li> <li>- 4 Online Quizzes on <i>Quizizz</i></li> </ul>	<i>Post-it</i> station (anonymous written feedback) after each class.
Week 16	Formal assessment (Written test)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Online questionnaire</li> <li>- Focus group interview</li> </ul>

During the first two weeks, the syllabus and methodology were explained to the students. The teacher-researchers explained how to join and work on *Playposit* and *Quizizz* (researchers selected these two online learning tools since they were more suitable for the purposes of the intervention than the institutional LMS) and then how the class was going to be “flipped”. Every week, before class, students were asked to watch interactive videos on *Playposit*. This involved them completing a range of activities (short exercises, quizzes and worksheets) at

home and bringing their work to the class. The videos were created or selected from various video-sharing websites and uploaded beforehand to *Playposit* to allow the students time to watch them and carry out the activities. Some of the exercises required that students took notes of the content or exercises to discuss them or clarify doubts in the classroom.

After accessing the content material online, students attended the class sessions from week 3 to week 15, which were planned according to the content proposed by the institutional syllabus. The format used for the planning included the lesson objectives, flipped activities (individual learning space), check-up/warm up, practice activities (group learning space), wrap up, and post-class work. After planning considering all the skills proposed by the institutional syllabus (listening, speaking, reading and writing), all classes were taught by using different activities such group work, problem-solving tasks, station-rotation work, board games, debate, writing activities and discussions. At the end of each class, a “feedback *Post-It* station” was created in order for students to write down their impressions of how active they felt during the various activities. The *Post-Its* were written anonymously so students felt free to give their opinions (As Ramirez suggested in personal communication, March 3, 2018). The assessment was carried out through four online quizzes along the semester and a final written test, during week 16, as required by the institution.

### Data collection techniques and instruments

In this action research project, qualitative data collection methods were used. Data were collected in Spanish but comments were translated into English by the authors. Due to limitations of space, only the translations are included in this article.

*Questionnaire:* The quantifiable qualitative data for this research were collected through an online 10-item questionnaire (See Appendix 1). This questionnaire was designed based on the first three pillars of Flipped Learning, with a five-point Likert-scale response set (SD: *strongly disagree*, D: *disagree*, N: *neutral*, A: *agree*, and SA: *strongly agree*). All of the items intended to explore students’ perceptions of Flipped Learning after experimenting with the approach for a period of 16 weeks.

*Immediate written feedback:* Students were requested to provide immediate written feedback after each lesson. This was achieved through a *Post-It* station in the classroom, in which students were asked to write (either in English or Spanish) their impressions of their role

during the implementation. Each group had a different *Post-it* color (yellow group, green group, red group, pink group, and blue group) in order to identify where the comment came from and therefore to organize the data when it came to the data analysis.

*Focus group interview:* After administering the questionnaire, a focus group interview was conducted (Focus Group A in which students were giving codes, A1-A18) in order to explore the online questionnaire (See Appendix 1) items in greater depth. A focus group was appropriate since it allowed the researchers to explore attitudes and perceptions, feelings, and ideas about the topic (Denscombe, 2004). The participants of the focus group had to meet three criteria: first, they had to have attended all classes and had participated in all stages of the implementation; second, they had to have completed the Flipped Learning online questionnaire; and finally, they had to have fulfilled all the online pre-class and post-class activities (*Playposit* and *Quizizz*). Although 46 participants met all of these criteria, only 18 volunteered to participate in the focus group interview.

### **Data analysis and interpretation**

To answer the question of this action research project with regards to students' perceptions of *activeness* during the implementation of Flipped Learning, the analysis of the data is displayed according to three main pre-established categories, which are the first three pillars of the Flipped Learning approach (*Flexible Environment*, *Learning Culture*, and *Intentional Content*). In the process of interpretation, the researchers analyzed the questionnaire by doing a statistical analysis. Later, the researchers coded the information gathered from the focus group interview and the *Post-it* feedback station to categorize them according to the questionnaire items. Finally, in the discussion section, the results have been contrasted with those found in previous studies.

### **Results and discussion**

In general, data demonstrated that a high percentage of students felt that Flipped Learning helped them become more active learners. This study provided participants with opportunities to revise their role in terms of *activeness* and examples of these opportunities are provided in the following sections. The results are discussed in terms of the research question which was: *What are students' perceptions of activeness during the implementation of the Flipped Learning approach?*

### Flexible environment

The first four items refer to students' perceptions regarding the components of the *Flexible Environment* pillar (defined in the literature review section) in terms of *activeness*.

Table 2. Tabulation students' answers items 1 to 4 from the questionnaire.

	1. I was able to access the class content anytime and anywhere on Playposit and Quizizz.	2. I did more than listening while watching the video.	3. The activities provided me with different opportunities to demonstrate knowledge of the content learned in class.	4. I liked the flexibility of choosing what activities to do during station rotation work.
Strongly agree	39,9 %	29,9 %	44,6 %	57 %
Agree	49,6 %	52,8 %	48,8 %	30,6 %
Neutral	1,7 %	6,3 %	0 %	5,8 %
Disagree	4,1 %	7,1 %	1,7 %	2,5 %
Strongly disagree	5 %	3,9 %	4,1 %	4,1 %

For the first item, 39.7% of students strongly agreed and 49.6% agreed that they were able to access the class content anytime and anywhere on *Playposit* and *Quizizz*. The students' responses to access to contents were generally positive, with six comments from the focus group and 36 responses from the immediate feedback supporting this item. For example, in excerpt 1, student A6 said during the focus group interview, "*Maybe I could watch the video in the bus when I didn't have time at home.*" And a student from the yellow group wrote in the immediate feedback, "*I liked that I watched the video when I could and I could repeat the lesson.*" This finding is in line with the observation by Roehl, Reddy and Shannon (2013), Tucker (2012) and Ramirez (2018) who noted that modern-day students tend to appreciate the flexibility of choosing when and where to access instructional content, thus allowing them to have more face-to-face time in class to practice.

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For the second item, 52.8% of the students agreed and 29.9% strongly agreed that they did more than listening while they were watching the video. This finding was supported by nine comments from the focus group interview and 15 from the immediate feedback. For example, in excerpt 2, student A9 said "*You know that throughout the video there are certain questions, you needed a notebook and a pencil to take notes.*" and one student from the red group wrote "*People learn*

*and practice with exercises while watching the videos.*” We can note that students saw the need to take notes to learn or to clarify doubts, making them active during the moment of watching the videos at home, also that they felt comfortable having the option of watching them at any place or device before coming to the class. These two previous items’ results are consistent with the outcomes in the study by Roach (2014) and Hung (2015), in which students indicated that watching the videos at home was positive to their learning needs and their pace of learning. In the study by Zainuddi and Attaran (2016), 100% of students watched the videos and stated that they paid attention when watching the video lessons, took notes, paused and replied according to their needs. Lastly, as in the study by Buitrago and Diaz (2018), students demonstrated a high level of motivation towards the use of technology to assist their learning.

For the third item, 48.8% percent of students agreed and 44.6% strongly agreed that the activities provided them with different opportunities to demonstrate knowledge of the content learned in class. This was supported by six comments from the focus group and 33 from the written feedback. For example, in excerpt 3, student A9 said, *“It was important the fact that you may also support your partners in a subject that they are not so good at during the activities”*, and from the *Post-It* station one of the students from the blue group wrote, *“I felt very active because the activities provided me chances to demonstrate that I have understood the topic.”* From this statement, we can see that students were actively participating and that the activities were accurate to show that they had understood, for example when they explained to each other during activities. This is consistent with some of the assertions made by Johnson (2013), who states that flipping a class can provide a self-paced instructional setting that can effectively support mastery learning for students. Students value the opportunity to review the instructional content at their own pace (Flores & Savage, 2007; Kornell & Metcalfe, 2006; Ramirez, 2018; Roach, 2014). Also, in the research by Garay and Torregrosa (2016) in which a category named “demonstrate mastery” (p. 64) emerged from this pillar concluding that according to the acquired knowledge students obtained before class, they could participate positively during the activities.

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Finally, for item four, 57% of the students strongly agreed and 30.6% agreed that they liked the flexibility of choosing what activities to do during the station work classes. This item was supported by 12 comments from the focus group and 30 from the *Post-It* feedback. For example, in excerpt 4, student A2 said, *“Well, if I like an activity, I will put more interest in it as if something is imposed on me (...) I*

liked that, choosing what you want to learn.” Moreover, student A1 expressed, “The fact that there are different opportunities is great, because you do not enter in a routine. There was the excitement of moving on to another game or activity.” Finally, one student from the blue group wrote “Choosing what activity to do first make me feel relax when learning.” From this item, it is evident that students were taking part when selecting which task to do first and where to go next in the sessions. They remarked that they felt they learned more by being able to decide on the activities, which was compatible with the findings of Wanner and Palmer (2015) and Al-Zahrani (2015). In the Flipped Learning approach, there is an opportunity for differentiation, students have a choice of activities, and gifted students may choose advanced activities while others will go for easier ones according to their level and needs (Siegle, 2014).

#### Learning Culture

The following three items show students’ perceptions of *activeness* with regards to the second pillar, *Learning Culture* (defined in the literature review section).

Table 3. Tabulation students’ answers items 5 to 7 from the questionnaire.

	5. My role as a learner was important when I carried out the activities.	6. I was able to take part in all the activities suggested in class.	7. I was able to learn when interacting with my peers.
Strongly agree	37,2 %	43 %	45,5 %
Agree	53,7 %	45,5 %	43 %
Neutral	3,3 %	5 %	5 %
Disagree	0 %	2,5 %	2,5 %
Strongly disagree	4,1 %	4,1 %	4,1 %

For the fifth item, 53.7% of the students agreed and 37.2% strongly agreed that their role as a learner was important when they were executing the activities, their role as a learner understood as active participants who are autonomous and in charge of their learning process. This was supported by nine comments from the focus group and 24 from the written feedback. For example, in excerpt 5, student A9 said, “the role of the student is definitely very important because if we are not responsible, that will affect the method and the way of giving the class.” From the *Post-It* station, a student from the green group wrote “I feel that my responsibility increased since the class depends now more on me.” It is perceived that they understood how relevant their role was

to succeed in the activities, they needed to be active at home, revising the content as well as being active during class time. This is also one of the findings in the study by Mosher (2016), in which teachers noticed an increase in student responsibility. For example, students came better prepared to class, sought help from peers and teachers and managed their time to watch the videos and do the homework. Additionally, in the research by Clark (2015), Yeo (2018) and Wagner-Loera (2018), it was found that students agreed that the collaborative tasks required each of them to take an active role in their learning processes.

For the sixth item, 45.5% of the students agreed and 43% strongly agreed that they were able to take part in all the activities suggested in class. To support this, eight comments from the focus group and 12 from the immediate feedback were in agreement with this. For instance, in excerpt 6, student A1 said that *“All the activities took into account the topic and level, so we were always capable of doing them.”* Another student, A11, commented that *“All the activities were engaging; we always wanted to participate.”* Finally, one student from the red group wrote: *“Thanks to the videos I was able to participate in the activities in the classroom.”* By analyzing this statement, students showed their interest in participating and keeping themselves busy. This was similar to the findings of Hernandez and Torres (2017) and Mosher (2016) who stated that Flipped Learning allows teachers to differentiate through class time activities, by giving varying levels of activities or scaffolding an activity for certain students.

Lastly, for the seventh item, 45.5% of students strongly agreed and 43% agreed that they were able to learn when interacting with their peers. This item was supported by 15 comments from the focus group and 42 from the immediate feedback. For example, a student from the red group wrote in the immediate feedback station, *“This method is good because you can interact more and transmit knowledge.”* In the focus group interview, excerpt 7, student A5 stated that *“I could learn more when I listened to my classmates explaining something to me.”* Referring to the previous comments, it is noticeable that students were involved as they explained to each other, and that this aspect of the tasks was one that they valued the most, since they realized they were constructing knowledge through interacting with their peers. These findings are similar to the ones found in the studies by Han (2018), Hung (2015), Strayer (2012) and Yeo (2018) in which students saw the value in helping others to learn.

### Intentional content

The following three items illustrate the link between students' role in terms of *activeness* and the third pillar, *Intentional content* (defined in the literature review section).

Table 4. Tabulation students' answers items 8 to 10 from the questionnaire.

	8. My learning process was considered when selecting the topics to study.	9. The videos selected by the teacher were appropriate to our level and context.	10. I could self-assess my learning progress.
Strongly agree	34,7 %	53,7 %	33,9 %
Agree	50,4 %	38,8 %	58,7 %
Neutral	7,4 %	0 %	0 %
Disagree	4,1 %	2,5 %	2,5 %
Strongly disagree	3,3 %	3,3 %	3,3 %

For the eighth item, 50.4% of students agreed and 34.7% strongly agreed that their learning process was considered when selecting the topics to study. Nine comments from the focus group and six from the immediate feedback were found in the data in regards to this statement. For the ninth item, 53.7% of students strongly agreed and 38.8% agreed that the videos selected by the teacher were appropriate to their level and content having this item ten comments from the focus group and 24 from the written feedback in favor. To support items eighth and ninth, in excerpt 8, student A13 expressed that *“Our process was taken into account because the teacher based the topics that we were going to study in things that we had already seen before.”* Another student, A5, in excerpt 9, remarked that *“The videos were appropriate to our level and they were displayed in a progressive way in relation to content.”* Furthermore, from the immediate written feedback, a student from the blue group wrote *“The videos have enough information and helped us not to fall into a routine since we could go over them at any time.”*

From the previous comments, we can observe that students recognized how the selection of the topics and videos was related to their learning process and their level and content, by prioritizing the content they could explore in direct instruction time. By doing this, the teacher-researchers were differentiating when planning. This is similar to the study by Mosher (2016), in which one category was named *“Intentional planning”* (p. 69), referring to the teacher being intentional in planning the video and planning the differentiation activities.

Finally, for the tenth item, 58.7% of students agreed and 33.9% strongly agreed that they could self-assess their learning progress. For

this item it was found a number of 15 comments from the focus group and 12 from the *Post-It* feedback station. Referring to students' self-assessment process, in excerpt 10, student A13 said, "*I went to classes because I realized that I had learned something.*" Another student, A3, said that "*Before this class I had never questioned whether I was learning or not (...) in this class I reflected on what was difficult for me and the reason for my failures.*" Finally, from the *Post-It* feedback station, a student from the blue group expressed that "*This method makes me feel I can recognize what I have learned and my strengths when working with my peers.*" These perceptions from students confirm the valuable opportunity they had to actively self-assess their learning progress, making them aware of what they were learning and the things they needed to improve to enrich their learning process. Parallels may be drawn here with the research by Chao, Chen, and Chuang (2015) and Graney (2018), in which participants experienced a positive attitude towards self-assessment of their learning and the chance to have more control over their progress (Baker, 2000).

### Conclusions

The purpose of this study was to explore students' perceptions of activeness during the implementation of a Flipped Learning approach as part of an EFL course at a Colombian university. It is clear that students' perceptions of the Flipped Learning approach were generally positive, which is consistent with the findings of several other studies (Afrilyasanti, Cahyono, & Astuti, 2016; Maher, Lipford, & Singh, 2013; Bishop & Verleger, 2013; Buitrago & Diaz, 2018; Butt, 2014; González, 2016; Hung, 2015; Ramirez, 2018, Tohei, 2018). In general, students agreed that this pedagogical approach provided them with the opportunity to take an active role in their learning process.

Firstly, participants in this study are digital natives (Roehl, Reddy and Shannon, 2013), and this was evident through their preference for the increased use of technology. Indeed, they were actively involved in the Flipped Learning course through its videos and online platforms. Secondly, the data showed that students preferred to work collaboratively in groups whilst in the class by interacting and communicating among them, which is a prominent feature of active learning.

After the intervention, students acknowledged that they needed to take more responsibility for their own learning. Students noted they were more in control of their own learning process than the teacher (Han, 2018), and reported feeling more in control of the pace and amount of content they learned. They also recognized how teachers

took into account their own individual learning processes when selecting the content, by giving them different opportunities to learn. Another advantage in terms of *activeness* from Flipped Learning was the increase in students' engagement. Students perceived that they were more engaged due to the active learning opportunities provided by the course.

It must be recognized that there were certain limitations to this research project. The first limitation was the number of volunteers, which was relatively low. The second one was that it was difficult to try to set up the time for applying the instruments since we had to do it in a different time from classroom time. And that, ideally, it would have been preferable to expose students to the approach for a longer time, but considering that the teachers change groups each semester, it was not possible to do so. Also, after analyzing the results from the intervention we consider that something to improve would have been to create all the videos ourselves, since some students expressed that the video would have been more appealing to them if the teachers-researchers were the person explaining in it.

Despite the aforementioned limitations, we have to highlight the relevance of its findings. Students' engagement, students' voice and choice, students' ownership of learning and students' preference for collaborative work were prominent as noteworthy in this study. The Flipped Learning approach provided students with student-centered lessons and this study has gathered their perceptions in order to improve teaching practices and to contribute to broadening teachers' understanding of this topic in Colombia and around the world.

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### Appendix 1

#### UNIVERSIDAD TECNOLÓGICA Y PEDAGÓGICA DE COLOMBIA STUDENTS PERCEPTIONS OF ACTIVENESS DURING FLIP LEARNING IMPLEMENTATION

Rate each item on the scale provided to indicate your agreement.

Questions	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. I was able to access the class content anytime and anywhere on <i>Playposit</i> and <i>Quizizz</i> .					
2. I did more than listening while watching the video.					
3. The activities provided me with different opportunities to demonstrate knowledge of the content learned in class.					
4. I liked the flexibility of choosing what activities to do during station rotation work.					
5. My role as a learner was important when I carried out the activities.					
6. I was able to take part in all the activities suggested in class.					
7. I was able to learn when interacting with my peers.					
8. My learning process was considered when selecting the topics to study.					
9. The videos selected by the teacher were appropriated to our level and content.					
10. I could self-assess my learning progress.					