The CATESOL Journal

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Multilingual Course Re-design(ing) Amid Local and Global Crises: Lessons Going Forward

This reflective essay discusses my experience over one year during the COVID-19 global pandemic. I analyze my experiences teaching and my observations of students, concluding that the affordances of blended learning can be useful for engaging multilingual students, and that such engagement allows for more time for formative feedback for students. Specifically, a blended approach was used in a graduate ESL communications class for international students, most of whom took the class from their home countries. However, this approach may not necessarily fit with the teaching style of the instructor. Thus, the teaching and learning context adjusted by the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in a transformative teaching experience, wherein the instructor learned the value of more self-directed learning by the students. In this paper, course context will first be outlined, followed by detailed accounts of each course design approach, including cases in which students took the classes entirely asynchronously due to time zone conflicts. Specific assignments for synchronous and asynchronous teaching and learning contexts will be described, and I include a critical analysis of my teaching style with each. I review the supports that allowed for experimentation with teaching approaches during this remote time and I describe overall pedagogical implications.

Keywords: course design, reflective teaching, blended learning, international graduate students

Late afternoon in the middle of the last instructional week of Winter quarter 2020, the chancellor emailed the university community to announce classes going online immediately due to the threat posed by COVID-19. While the idea of classes moving online had been floating around for the past week due to a couple potential cases on various college campuses, the announcement still seemed abrupt. Although I had only used Zoom once before, I emailed my students and announced that the final day of class, tomorrow, would be held on this platform. More significantly, I emailed students slated to present and asked if they'd be willing to use the platform for their presentations—teaching mini-lessons and leading a discussion. Somewhat surprisingly, the student presenters all replied affirmatively, which confirmed my hunch that the graduate students were quite familiar with—more so than me—the affordances of video conferencing technology. I was astonished the next day when my students appeared online and that the presentations –while certainly not flawless—were adapted well and succeeded online. I therefore left the end of the quarter with the impression that, at least for these types of students—international graduate students training to become teaching assistants (TAs)—this move to the digital sphere could and would work for teaching and learning. In the subsequent quarters that I taught, my

observations of students and my discussions with colleagues transformed this notion of live, or synchronous online teaching, a very close replication of in-person teaching. What details below is the evolution of my teaching online during this emergency remote context, as well as implications for teaching in such a context.

On Friday, March 13, notably when President Trump declared a national state of emergency, most learning in California shifted from a brick-and-mortar space to online. The purpose of this critical reflection is to document and analyze the effects of different pedagogical delivery methods and the lessons learned based on instructor observation.

Context

This account considers my experience teaching remotely online due to the COVID-19 pandemic, from March 2020 through June 2021. Employed at a research university in California, I taught both undergraduate and graduate student ESL courses during this time, once for the former and twice for the latter. Each course spanned 10 weeks in length. Below outlines the classroom contexts for each.

The undergraduate class fulfilled both the University of California Entry Level Writing Requirement and the UCLA undergraduate English as a Second Language writing requirement. Students placed into the class based on their results from the University of California's Analytical Writing Placement Exam (AWPE). The class focused on producing coherent and well-developed pieces of academic writing through a process-based approach. During the quarter, students completed multiple drafts of three high stakes writing projects based on assigned course readings, as well as other smaller writing tasks. Thirteen students in total enrolled in the course, including 1 first-year, 7 second-year, 3 fourth-year, and 2 exchange students. The course had an especially high level of heterogeneity: it included students from Europe, Korea, China, the US, and Malaysia. Finally, the students spanned an array of majors, with 3 from Business Economics, 3 from Sociology, and the rest in a smattering of other fields, including Biology, Design and Media Arts, World Arts and Cultures, Asian Languages and Linguistics, Microbiology, and Theater. Students in this course ranged in age from 18-23 years old.

The graduate courses were communication courses designed for the high-intermediate level and were designed to fulfill the university's graduate English language requirement. Students placed into this class through the university's English as a Second Language Placement Exam (ESLPE), or from placing into and successfully completing the course's precursor, a low-intermediate communications course for international graduate students. Compared to the undergraduate course described above, this graduate course not only focused on writing both to a general audience and within disciplines but also included speaking skills for formal academic contexts. Throughout the quarter, students completed a literature review, data commentary, and summary and evaluation, along with two formal presentations. In terms of student body, the two graduate courses, offered in Winter and Spring 2021, contained 15 and 10 students respectively. The winter course had 7 students from Applied Economics, 3 from Engineering, 2 from Architecture and Urban Design, 1 each from Public Health, Management, and Germanic Languages. All students were studying in master's degree programs, except for one student enrolled in a doctorate program. In terms of nationality, 9 were from China, 2 from Thailand, 2 from Japan, and 1 each from Korea and Germany. In the Spring 2021 course, 5 were from Applied Economics, 2 from Engineering, and 1 each from Public Policy, Computer Science, and Management; 3 students in total were in doctorate programs, with the rest in master's programs. Seven of the students were from China and 3 were from Japan. The ages of students in both of the graduate courses ranged, but most were in their 20s.

Course Design: Synchronous and Blended Approaches

I will be analyzing three quarters of teaching. I will focus the discussion of the first quarter on my teaching of an ESL composition class for multilingual undergraduates since the other class that I taught during that time was too small to draw reliable conclusions from.

Synchronous Instruction

For my first full quarter teaching online, I didn't change my syllabus much from the previous quarter; we met for roughly 2 hours twice a week online instead of in a building, midmorning PDT. My unchanged syllabus was partly due to overwhelm without having much time to re-envision my pedagogical approach for a remote setting, because I had spent finals week and spring break, like many of us, learning how to navigate our new digital classroom and attending professional development seminars about using digital tools. I was also operating off of the positive outcome from my last day of instruction of the previous quarter, my single-day experience with graduate students, when the class went quite well. Thus, I thought I didn't need to change my course design; I would merely mimic in-person learning online by using breakout groups for group work.

For this class, I was fortunate that my campus bookstore was able to transform my previous hard copy reader into an e-reader. While I was uncomfortable with the idea of reading digitally in general because I had the habit of annotating hard copies, I found a short tutorial for annotating the e-reader and showed it to my class. However, I was unable to fully adapt to this practice and was not motivated to do so because I had a hard copy with mostly the same content from the previous quarter. I also did not discuss with my students their impressions and experience with the e-reader compared to the hard copies they were more accustomed to.

In terms of engagement, I had students turn in digital worksheets that they completed during class. I referred to this as their participation credit for the day's lesson. Essentially, I reasoned that because I couldn't observe them completing the worksheets and activities as I would in the in-person class, I would have them demonstrate their engagement by uploading completed documents at the end of each class. This would be the evidence to show their engagement. I held classes entirely live on Zoom and recorded and posted video recordings for students who were unable to attend synchronously due to time zone restrictions, technical issues, etc. Time management was an issue online, as we didn't always have time to finish a task, but I asked students to upload whatever content they did complete so that I could have record of it. I didn't end up reviewing these assignments; instead, I used them as attendance markers.

Blended & Flipped Instruction

For the next quarter's class, I shifted from teaching mostly multilingual undergrads to international graduate students but at a similar level of proficiency. At that point of the pandemic, ESL classes in our department were scheduled later in the day to account for students who returned home, mostly to China and Japan. By this time, Winter 2021, Zoom fatigue was also setting in, and alternate approaches to online course delivery were being discussed and implemented. I had heard from colleagues about the success of using more asynchronous learning experiences with students. Based on a conversation with a colleague who had just finished teaching the course remotely, I redesigned my course to employ a more blended approach, in which the first hour of each day's class was held synchronously on Zoom, while the second hour was either an independent asynchronous activity or a synchronous small group meeting. Because most of the students taking the course had returned to their home countries, this course design used a more time-sensitive approach to instruction and produced an element of community with the small group meetings that was likely missed with the lack of in-person teaching.

The class time of the Spring 2021 quarter was originally scheduled during the morning PDT. As I anticipated, the first day of class was mostly attended by students who looked sleepy, reporting that it was 2 a.m. for them. Afraid that they wouldn't be as engaged during our scheduled class time and worried that attendance would drop over the quarter with students defaulting to watching the course recordings, I emailed out a "WhenToMeet" poll and surveyed students on what times of the two class days they would be available to meet for synchronous class. Based on this survey, one two-hour slot was available for all but one student, who could attend only the last half hour of live class. I decided to confirm this two-hour slot of time for our weekly synchronous class. While I knew Zoom fatigue might be an issue, I also noticed that the one-hour classes in the previous quarter were too short to get substantive activities done. And although I considered a full asynchronous option, I did want some time together for interaction and connection in a whole-class atmosphere. The third hour of class retained the small group meeting activity from the previous quarter, while the last hour of class consisted of an independent activity. Typically, I posted to the course site Monday's asynchronous class agenda and tasks on the preceding Friday, and then we met as a group synchronously on Wednesdays, in which the two-hour synchronous teaching yielded, as I desired, time for more in-depth activities.

For the last two quarters mentioned above, I employed a flipped classroom model, wherein students study material outside of class and then participate in active learning activities during class time. Summarized in Hamdan et al.'s 2013 white paper, the flipped classroom methodology is outlined in four pillars: **F**lexible environments, **L**earning culture shift, **I**ntentional Content, and **P**rofessional educators. The first, **f**lexible environments, includes students choosing when and where they learn. For my classes, this meant students would choose a time, independent of space, to complete the textbook reading and reading guide activities before their cohorts' mutually agreed upon meeting day. Second, the **l**earning culture shift refers to a more student-centered approach "where in-class time is meant for exploring topics in greater depth and creating richer learning opportunities" (p. 5). For my classes, this meant reviewing the most common errors I observed in the groups' learning logs, along with completing tasks based on students' questions and reported concerns. Third, **i**ntentional content refers to the instructor deciding which content would merit being taught directly versus material that could be reviewed first by the student alone. In the week's reading guides, which students completed independently before discussing with their cohorts, specific parts of the textbook were highlighted as worthy of more or less attention depending on how difficult the task was. Indeed, this kind of filter was employed to ensure the material studied was accessible by the student—and cohort—alone. The fourth pillar of F.L.I.P. represents the **p**rofessional educator's ability to "maximize the face-to-face time between teachers and students" (pp. 5-6). While in my case such face-to-face time was substituted for Zoom time, this point for me was most challenging. Throughout this pandemic year (and even after!) I often asked myself and my colleagues what the best use of traditional class time was, i.e., synchronous whole class time on Zoom. By the end of the year, my conclusion arrived at students completing exercises in small groups (different from their cohorts) via breakout rooms before whole class debriefs. In addition, time was spent as a whole class previewing additional writing strategies, editing small pieces of student writing, and having small question-and-answer sessions with students, while the entire class listened in. This blend was a mix of teacher and student talk time, with emphasis on the latter. Overall, the above flipped methodology seems to align well with social constructivist notions of teaching, as the cohort meetings to discuss the independent study provided collaborative spaces for the discussion of meaning.

Various technological and logistical challenges faced students during this time of emergency remote instruction. Of note, internet connectivity and reliability, and even electricity, were issues both in my home and globally. I empathized with my students, and thus it was important for the class to be recorded, so that those who dropped off from the Zoom call could later review the material missed.

Further, at that time, some students joined class temporarily from government sponsored quarantine hotels, while others were trying to either fly back to their home countries or travel domestically to be with relatives. Thus, not only did some people miss class and need to watch the recording, but students also struggled with turning their work in on time. While in the past I had a firm no late work policy, flexibility was necessary, and I worked with the students' circumstances to obtain and assess the assignments.

Asynchronous Option

While classes were scheduled or rescheduled to consider the majority of students' local time zones, some students could not attend live class sessions because class was held during their local nighttime. For the first class, early in the pandemic when students were still mostly in the US, this global time difference was most problematic, as only a handful of students had returned over spring break to their home countries, including Malaysia and China. To allow these students to take the course and progress in their studies, I first noted this policy explicitly in my syllabus: "If you are in a different time zone, and notified me of that fact, you will fulfill the attendance and participation requirement of the course by watching the videos and completing the short, corresponding assignments. These assignments are meant to ensure your engagement with the video-recorded classes and simulate your class participation." Further, I identified specific class days that would be most useful for students to attend, if they were able. I did this by highlighting days in the syllabus that included discussion of key readings and omitted other days like peer review. Constructed as an independent activity, peer review would be more easily completed offline, not in the synchronous class environment. Further, I constructed an alternative lesson plan for students who could not attend class live. This consisted of students watching the recorded class, completing in-class tasks, and uploading the same worksheets that the other students uploaded. Also, for each of the three writing projects, the class's most high stakes tasks, instead of sharing their ideas live in class, I had them either post to our course site a short written paper proposal or a video of them giving it orally, and I gave them feedback on these. I then had these students arrange an online meeting to complete their prewriting group task and email me, and upload online—as the other students did—their notes and a fun picture or screenshot of the students meeting. This made it a bit more lighthearted and produced evidence of their discussion.

Near the end of the quarter, I met with one of the students who took the class asynchronously and asked about his experience. He responded that he missed taking the class live, and when asked specifically about completing the worksheets along with watching the recording, he astutely pointed out that he felt like he had to do less of the learning this way. When students on the recording were silent and completing their work before the whole class discussion, he was able to simply wait and take notes based on the whole class debrief. While the live students could have certainly not used the time to complete the work, they were likely more motivated to do so in case I called on them during the debrief, which I often did. However, watching the recording meant the student would not be called on spontaneously. Therefore, I rethought my approach for the subsequent quarters, wanting still to allow for an asynchronous option for students who couldn't attend live class. By this time, Winter 2021, most students had returned to their home countries and were no longer split between here and abroad; thus I had only one student per class who was unable to attend the live sessions due to the time difference. I instructed both of these students to watch the recordings and then produce a short-written report, including a summary of content that was most useful for them, and a reflection on how the information applied to their own understanding. Finally, I asked students to email me questions they had as part of the report, and to complete all in-person tasks as the live students did. The metacognitive component to this asynchronous option was intriguing to read and respond to. Essentially, their reports turned into written conversations, where I commented or responded in-text to them. This approach inadvertently gave me

some great insight into the content most useful for the students and how they integrated the information into their existing schema.

Engaging and Connecting

In all three courses, a variety of teaching practices were adapted for the online environment. For synchronous teaching, I implemented a couple different lessons for grammar. With the graduate students, I used the discussion board as an interactive platform for focused instruction. In person, I would typically give students a sheet with a few of their sentences that shared the same error. Students would inductively analyze and correct the errors first individually, then discuss in pairs, and debrief as a class, all before implementing editing strategies in their writing and ending with a quick pair check-in. However, in the virtual space, I was challenged to create an observable activity. I began by sharing my screen and displaying a couple sentences with a shared grammar error so that the whole class could inductively analyze the errors, and then I shared editing strategies with the students. Then, I had students scan their writing, identifying errors (or grammar well done!) and posting the original and revised, as appropriate, on the discussion forum. As a whole class, I would ask for volunteers who wanted their edits discussed before I randomly chose a couple students' posts to review together. This interaction online was a solid adaptation of my in-person lessons, which are heavily influenced by Long's Interaction Hypothesis (1996), which states that learning takes place with exchanges. I also made sure to comment on each student's posts either in class or after, to ensure the student received a response, and so that other students could see their classmate's work and my response. I also adapted my editing game activity, the proofreading stage of their writing process, to an online domain by assigning pairs to breakout rooms where they each shared their edits and took turns making a move in tic-tac-toe for each successful edit (https://www.mathisfun.com/games/tic-tac-toe.html). This was simply an adaptation of showing a classmate their paper edits and writing an X or O on a piece of scratch paper in class.

Digital Tools for Connection

Conferences, an integral part of each of my courses, were modified for an online setting; instead of meeting individually with students in person, I met with each student on Zoom for their major writing assignments. Most of the time I had students screenshare to give them more agency over their writing and the dialogue that ensued. I gave students who had lower proficiency the option to screenshare or for me to share my screen. I usually ended up screensharing their writing, as it was more efficient to locate and discuss specific parts of the paper. Overall, I found and continue to find having students screenshare their writing disorienting for me, as I have a harder time contextualizing their selected point of discussion because I cannot easily pan out and orient their content within the broader piece of writing. However, logistically, using Zoom as a platform for conferencing has been a much better experience than using Google Chat, which I used a few years ago but abandoned because my students and I found it less user-friendly. Overall, individual student conferences continued to be a valued part of the writing class with students evaluating their satisfaction with this element of the curricula most highly. Such formative assessment may be so valuable since it offers an extended discussion for negotiated meaning, especially when multiple revisions are encouraged (Chen & Zhang, 2017). The shift to using live web conferencing for conferences enabled the extended dialogue between myself and the student, positively informing their work in the class.

Google Docs were a new adoption to my approach, but they enabled me to visit groups that seemed stuck and to adjust the time of the activity based on the students' progress. These also embedded well into our online course management system, much more efficiently than traditional Word documents. For example, in a revising exercise, I assigned groups to a Google document by the author that they chose

to evaluate for their writing project, and I inserted a graphic organizer that had the following columns: concept, quote, and evidence. The students then worked to consult their drafts and as a sort of reverse outlining way, analyze their body paragraphs for these components and reflect that on the group's graphic organizer. By completing the organizers as a group, the students had access to a variety of approaches to the reading and could consult the Google Doc later on as they revised their writing.

For the asynchronous class time, the revised assignments resulted in one of the biggest changes in my teaching: increased formative feedback, including public-facing comments. By using a more asynchronous approach, I was able to offer more formative feedback, which coupled with scaffolding has "the potential to raise students' awareness and [continue to shape] their future writing practices," depending on student proficiency levels (Li & Zhang, 2022, p. 19). For assignments in which I thought students would benefit from seeing each other's work and my comments, I used the discussion forum. In addition to the adapted editing task described above, I also had students write up their paper proposals and use the asynchronous class time to respond to each student publicly. Likewise in research, such forums in course management sites were found to be welcomed by students, and served as sites of both learning and acquisition, characterized as "a zone for students to practice their language proficiency and acquire language input as well as content knowledge" (Krish, Hussin, & Sivpuniam, 2011, p. 97). Finally, I also crafted general commentary documents for other asynchronous assignments, including analysis of writing samples and completion of a source use quiz, so students could self-check their work that contained more closed-ended responses.

The small group activity employed the flipped classroom approach, as outlined previously, which lent itself well to the blended class design. Essentially, the flipped classroom maximizes class time for interaction, with more concentrated individual tasks for homework. Following this model, and adapted from a colleague's approach, students in the graduate course engaged in a cohort group activity that required them to independently complete a weekly reading guide for each textbook chapter. Before meeting with their group they outlined parts of the chapter to spend more time reading and identified which specific tasks to complete. During their weekly hour cohort meeting, the students were instructed to share their thoughts on the reading and their responses to the assigned tasks and discuss discrepancies to attempt to reach deeper understanding and agreement. The result of this meeting was a learning log, in which each group was responsible for producing a 3-2-1 report: 3 concepts that the group learned and thought to be particularly meaningful, 2 tasks or concepts that they wanted more practice with, and 1 question the group had for the instructor. Group members took turns rotating who was the secretary, who typed up the learning log, and who would post the log to the course site. This assignment was due on Mondays, the asynchronous learning day, which permitted me a couple days to review them and have them inform the lesson for Wednesday's synchronous class.

Connecting through Groups

The flipped approach in this blended format contained a number of benefits. Specifically, the cohort groups were sites of collaborative learning for the practice of higher order thinking skills. As Zhou (2020-21) found, such group learning has the potential for students to develop the higher-end cognitive skills, including evaluating and creating, especially when activities are balanced with individual and small group tasks, tailored to the students' interests, and given adequate time. Zhou's recommendation to teach the functional language needed to participate in such collaborative spaces early on is one area that I see I neglected. I can see the value of presenting a list based on sub-function, including agreeing, disagreeing, politely interrupting, etc., to increase the chances of students' full participation sooner in their cohort groups than later in the quarter when students are more comfortable with each other and are potentially

more willing to try such functions on their own. Then, with such functional language either explicitly learned at the beginning of the term or acquired by the end of the term, students might reach what Hirvela (1999) describes of collaborative learning: "This allows students to conduct, through the group negotiation process, important comprehension checks of their growing knowledge of writing" (p. 11). Such "negotiation" inevitably involves the exchange—either directly or indirectly—of formative feedback by their peers. For example, in one learning log, group members were asked to share their independently created sentences with hedging devices and decide on the two strongest ones and two that the group was unsure about to include in their group's learning log. One can imagine a conversation among students reading each other's writing and saying things like "I don't know about that…I think you need to put that verb in past because…." Indeed, formative feedback is useful for boosting student performance (Yu & Li, 2014). The authors found that when their students worked alone, they had no significant performance increase, but when students completed group-based formative assessment, their scores improved significantly. And more broadly, research has shown the "great promise of flipping the classroom for university-level English language learners" (Hung, 2017, p. 189) both due to the increase in active learning activities during class time and the increased formative feedback provided to learners.

This flipped classroom model, based on cohort groupings, includes the development of students' soft skills as well. For example, Yu & Li (2014) report that students in general enjoy the social aspects of group learning, and after their participation are more willing to work in groups in the future. This is an important point for international graduate students in particular who participate in a variety of team-based exchanges, whether research or project-based, as their full participation in such groups is desirable. Additionally, students reported increased confidence and self-direction after engaging in a flipped classroom approach, which also contributes to students' potential for increased participation in other project groups (Tsai, 2021). Finally, this pedagogical approach was found to have "a positive effect on students' learning attitudes" (p. 186), further confirming that such teaching and learning benefits students in the English language classroom.

After cohorts had submitted their group's learning logs, I reviewed them to inform my teaching of the material the following week during synchronous sessions. For each iteration of the graduate class, I used a Google Sheet to synthesize and debrief the learning logs during Wednesday's synchronous class. For the first iteration of the graduate course, I answered the questions from the learning logs both verbally and with typing in the synchronous class, and then followed that portion of class with tasks that students wanted more assistance with and ones that I thought to be most useful for our time together. However, I noticed that the verbal responses to the groups' questions took a good deal of time. Further, in course evaluations, students requested more time for interaction during the synchronous class. Therefore, in the subsequent quarter, I shifted to answering the questions in a typed format only and posted them for asynchronous reading. Instead, I focused the class time on interaction—small group and whole class tasks and debrief.

To engage the entire student, including addressing particular stressors that they may have endured during this odd historical time, I connected students to community resources and opportunities. First, I circulated a shared resources sheet with students. Then, early in 2021, the university announced a new app that connected international students to 24/7 mental health and well-being support services, which I emailed to my students. Most quarters my students also had access to a one-time private language session with an undergraduate student as part of a cultural exchange assignment for an Applied Linguistics course. Students could meet with this tutor to rehearse a class presentation, review a writing project, or for informal discussion. While I don't know how many students accessed these resources, the fact that students knew that help was available was hopefully positively impactful. Such university support services

are vital for supporting students' well-being in general (Cho & Yu, 2015), let alone in a worldwide pandemic. Additionally, in the wake of George Floyd's death and acts of racial injustice, along with local civil unrest, I extended the due date for the students' final projects. Also, I announced a campus event meant to engage students in dialogue about the events, helping them process.

Challenging My Teaching Style

Although I had read about the Western classroom favoring certain personality styles, i.e., extroversion, I did not realize how dramatic that implication was in my own teaching, and the extent to which my teaching has been affected by my personality. Tending toward extroversion, in an in-person class, I often walk away energized. Further, I viewed a quiet classroom as an ineffective one: low engagement and low interaction. What I neglected to see was the engagement that happened in the quiet, and what that quiet afforded not just my students, but me as well. I was initially reticent to experiment with blended teaching, believing that the asynchronous time would be lost teaching and learning time. In fact, that time was quite fruitful for the students. For example, for a lesson on crafting definitions, I first had students review a PPT slide deck with sample video definitions. Then, students studied two definitions for different audience, chose a concept from their discipline, and crafted two definitions: one for a general audience and another for their colleagues (adopted from Swales & Feak, 2017). I then gave the students formative feedback on their work. If this were a synchronous class activity, I would not have been able to spend as much time providing in-depth feedback as I did with the absence of teacher-fronted class time. That is, the teaching time was devoted to giving individualized formative feedback, which was more aligned with their *zone of proximal development* than a more limited feedback session in a whole class synchronous environment (Vygotsky, 1978). This new approach to teaching—typing extensive feedback on small class tasks instead of discussing with the whole class one or two student examples—resulted in individual feedback for all. In their recommendations for the creation of effective online courses, Zhang (2013) underscores the importance of formative feedback, including self-assessments. While the former is what I focused on in the course, it is the latter that I aim to include in future iterations. In sum, because individualized feedback is so important to student learning, this approach may well be warranted with the return to in-person instruction, with more time devoted to independent activities.

Program Support

This transformation of teaching would not have happened at the level that it did had it not been for supportive colleagues, in an atmosphere of collegiality. Not only did we exchange lessons and websites, but we also shared ideas and discussed student samples regularly. Although not all faculty are keen to share their materials, I was gratefully both the recipient of and the sender of course syllabi. Similarly, I met weekly with one instructor of the same class to discuss lesson plans and analyze student work. Further, the flipped classroom model and related content were shared with me by a colleague. The amount of material generated from the reading guides was daunting and it is this volume of preparation that can make the flipped redesign untenable, especially with unexpected shifts in course teaching assignments. As noted in their review of 43 articles on the flipped classroom in English language teaching, this workload can be mitigated with collaboration of instructors (Turan and Akdag-Cimen, 2020). This assistance made my more seamless shift into flipped teaching possible. Overall, such collegiality supported me and my students as I pivoted from one class to the next in this new remote setting.

Likewise, my department permitted me to choose my preferred delivery method: synchronous with recording, synchronous without recording, and asynchronous. And while I chose synchronous with recording for each of my classes, I did allow students to take the class on a case-by-case basis in an

asynchronous format, in order to aid them in progressing toward their degree. While I think that delivering the courses fully asynchronously might allow for more equal participation of all students—regardless of time zone—I do worry that the absence of verbal interaction might not be suitable for a communications class, which encompasses instruction in not only reading and writing, but speaking and listening as well. Further, the synchronous with recording option allowed for a blended model, e.g., the graduate classes being a mix of synchronous and asynchronous class activities.

My department was also open to rescheduling the class, based on student needs. For example, after the aforementioned survey was administered and a new class time was established, I was able to email our departmental administrator to have the official class time changed during the first week of class. These supports were useful for meeting the needs of students during the evolving COVID-19 crisis.

Implications for Teaching

I learned a variety of lessons during this past year of teaching. From the online teaching and learning environment, I learned that a blended approach offered an efficient and individualized method of teaching that also allowed for speaking and listening interaction within a whole class atmosphere. Whether ESL, specifically a communications class—focused on cultivating all four skills: reading, writing, listening, and speaking—could be successful is not yet known. However, the asynchronous class time does allow for engagement with the instructor and fellow students, especially in the form of formative assessment. Additionally, for the few students who are taking the synchronous course asynchronously, a summary and reflection report is more meaningful than a simple replication of tasks accomplished in live teaching. Further, a written dialogue from the instructor responding to the student's report can enhance the student's learning, engage the student, and provide (written) interaction that the student missed in the live class. An additional interactive activity is especially useful for such students where they form a cohort with those in similar time zones, as is feasible, to complete tasks at a mutually agreed upon time. Such an activity can also serve to help the students feel more connected to the class. Indeed, Chang & Windeatt (2016) found that students were more willing to share their work over time, after trust was established with their group members in online classes. The potential for difficult group dynamics can be off set with Zhang's (2013) recommendation to alter groupings often. While I used the cohort model throughout the quarter, I worked to mix groups during whole class synchronous time.

Despite the extra effort to engage appropriate technology for conferencing, it ultimately saves time for the instructor and the students to discuss their assignment using video conferencing software. Also, by having the students screenshare, I was able to ensure that they could access my feedback, which was difficult for some students to locate on the course site. It also helped the students exercise agency over their own work, increasing their confidence in leading the pace and content of the conference. This is one assistance that instructors can offer students to aid them "in setting their own agendas for [online] conferences" (Hewett, 2010, p. 50). Especially for graduate students who more often have more clearly defined professional and educational goals, student screen sharing allows for students to direct the instructor to personally significant writing issues which the instructor may be unaware of. More formative feedback through in-class assignments can provide the down time for the instructor to engage more deeply with students' work. And if in person, such tasks may mean the perhaps uncomfortable sound of silence, but with the satisfaction of learning happening, albeit on paper. For the added benefit of class-facing exchange between instructor and student, a discussion forum can be used for assignments, whether online or in person with students using their computers or smart phones. Finally, the flipped classroom model can be especially useful for online environments, in which students may be drained from Zoom fatigue, and thus

have less attention for class time. Regardless of the learning context, speaking interaction is desired by students, and can take place on both online and in-person teaching platforms.

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