Scholarship of Teaching and Learning: Grant Proposal

Partially Flipped Classroom (PFC) for Online Writing-intensive Courses:
Learning Outcomes and Student Perceptions using Direct and Indirect Assessment

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I ABSTRACT

Embracing the university's mission to better serve our student body, the Department of Languages and Culture Studies (LCS) is expanding the online course offerings of the writing-intensive course SPAN 3019(W) Hispanic Women Writers in Translation.[1] While this course offers many potential advantages, there are some unanswered questions about student learning and teaching effectiveness. For example, how do student perceptions differ in online courses versus face-to-face (F2F) delivery, specifically in W courses? Despite schedule-related advantages, among others, what are student perceptions about this mode of delivery with a Partially Flipped Classroom (PFC) pedagogy? How does the mode of delivery affect the students' achievement of learning outcomes? These questions are at the core of our project. The main objectives are to evaluate the impact of this instructional method and mode of delivery on student perceptions of the course, and to gain insight into student learning in such a course.

We intend to perform a comparative study of F2F versus online sections of SPAN 3019(W) by performing direct and indirect assessment to compare the outcomes between the two groups. Direct assessment will include summative assessment that uses student performance in multiple writing assignments. Indirect assessment will include multiple questionnaires that assess student perceptions of learning. The data analysis will include descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and parametric group comparisons using t-tests. If successful, this course could be offered over the summer with higher enrollments, thereby providing students opportunities for early graduation.

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[1] Examination of prose and poetry by women writers from Spain and the Americas to understand women's voices and other cultures. Conducted in English. Knowledge of Spanish not required. Not applicable toward Spanish major or minor.

II. BUDGET

Budget Request Page
January 15, 2019 to May 30, 2020

BUDGET: *Request by budget category. <u>Joint proposers must select one PI to be the lead and one department to receive this allocation</u>.*

Lead Principal Investigator: <u>   Dr. Mónica Rodríguez-Castro</u>
Principal Investigator 800#: 800859042
Title of Project: <u> Partially Flipped Classroom (PFC) for Online Writing-intensive Courses: Learning Outcomes and Student Perceptions using Direct and Indirect Assessment</u>
Allocate operating budget to Department of: <u> Languages and Culture Studies</u>

Fiscal Year One (January 15, 2019 to May 30, 2019)		
Faculty Stipend	Paid directly from Academic Affairs fund on May 15, 2019	
911250	Graduate Student Salaries	
911300	Special Pay to Faculty other than Grantee	$3850
915000	Student (Undergraduate or Graduate) Temporary Wages	
915900	Non-student Temporary Wages	
920000	Honorarium (Individual(s) not with UNCC)	
921160	Subject Incentive Fee	
925000	Domestic Travel	
926000	Foreign Travel	
928000	Communication and/or Printing	
930000	Supplies	
942000	Computing Equipment	
944000	Educational Equipment	
951000	Other Contracted Services	
Year One Subtotal		$3850

Lead Principal Investigator: Dr. Mónica Rodríguez-Castro		
Fiscal Year Two (July 1, 2019 to May 30, 2020)		
Faculty Stipend	Paid directly from Academic Affairs fund on May 15, 2020	$3850
911250	Graduate Student Salaries	
911300	Special Pay to Faculty other than Grantee	
915000	Student (Undergraduate or Graduate) Temporary Wages	
915900	Non-student Temporary Wages (see PD-17)	
920000	Honorarium (Individual(s) not with UNCC)	
921160	Subject Incentive Fee	
925000	Domestic Travel	
926000	Foreign Travel	
928000	Communication and/or Printing	
930000	Supplies	
942000	Computing Equipment	
944000	Educational Equipment	
951000	Other Contracted Services	
Year Two Subtotal		$3850
TOTAL FUNDS REQUESTED (Year One + Year Two)		$7700

SoTL Proposals that do not receive SoTL funds may be eligible for support from the Office of Assessment and Accreditation. If your SoTL proposal is not recommended for funding, would you like for your proposal to be shared with the Office of Assessment for review and consideration for funding from that office?   YES____X_____
                                                                NO_____

BUDGET NARRATIVE

AWARD	AMOUNT	JUSTIFICATION
Special Pay to Faculty Summer 2019	$3850	The budget includes summer stipend to support two faculty members, one stipend per summer. In Summer 2019, Dr. Paloma Fernández Sánchez (#801041229) will develop the necessary assessment instruments and will also initiate the data collection process in Fall 2019 (i.e. pre/post-course questionnaires). NOTE: Dr. Fernández Sánchez will be the instructor of record for the course. *The funds will not support the development of new course materials.*
Faculty Stipend Summer 2020	$3850	In Summer 2020, Dr. Mónica Rodríguez-Castro (#800859042) will complete the data collection process, perform analysis of the full data and will subsequently make the necessary changes to the online course based on the findings. A draft of the first manuscript for publication will also be prepared during this period.

III. LETTER OF SUPPORT

UNC CHARLOTTE

College of Liberal Arts & Sciences

Department of Languages and Culture Studies

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October 30, 2018

Scholarship of Teaching and Learning
Grant Selection Committee

Dear Committee members:

As Chair of the Department of Languages and Culture Studies, I write in support of a grant proposal from two colleagues, Dr. Mónica Rodríguez and Dr. Paloma Fernández titled "Partially Flipped Classroom (PFC) for Online Writing-intensive Courses: Learning Outcomes and Student Perceptions using Direct and Indirect Assessment." This research will have a direct and measurable effect on our future departmental offerings. The demand for online courses in our department, as in the university at large, is constantly increasing. Adding to this demand is the recent implementation of a new major concentration in Spanish called Hispanic Studies, which allows students with a major in another field to add a Spanish major more quickly. One feature of this new concentration is that it permits one class in English (from the student's other major, for example) to double count toward the Spanish major. Often students choose to double count the required writing intensive class. Thus, we have seen a sharp rise in the demand for W classes in Spanish. Drs. Rodríguez and Fernández have offered to revive a W course in Hispanic Women Writers that has not been offered for some time and to redesign it for online delivery using QM course design standards. Their grant proposal aims to compare a face to face section with an online version (both to be offered next Fall) in terms of both student outcomes and student perception of those outcomes. As we increasingly move toward online delivery in post-secondary education, it is important, not only to follow best practices, but to do the fundamental research from which best practices are derived. The results of this research project will not only help my department make decisions about which courses should or should not be delivered online on why, but will offer important data about how writing-intensive classes in general can be effectively taught online. I urge you to support their proposal.

Cordially,

Ann González

Ann González, Ph.D., Chair

The UNIVERSITY *of* NORTH CAROLINA *at* CHARLOTTE

An Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Employer

IV. PROJECT NARRATIVE (no more than 2500 words)

The Spanish program has seen an increasing demand for SPAN writing-intensive (W) courses due to the design of a new Hispanic Studies concentration targeted toward double majors. Broadly speaking, this effort will allow us to enhance student access to writing-intensive course offerings within iCLAS with possibilities of crosslistings with both Latin American Studies and WGST, among others. Furthermore, many transfer students and double majors in LCS could benefit from the online course offering since it offers schedule flexibility along with an innovative and dynamic learning environment that primarily aims to be student-centered. This course will aim to integrate best practices from Communication across the Curriculum (CxC) for undergraduates developing communication skills in two majors.

We propose a pilot study that aims at evaluating the online delivery of SPAN 3019(W), a course that fosters best practices of a writing-intensive approach in a Partially-Flipped Classroom pedagogy. This course incorporates hands-on tasks with low-stakes and high-stakes assignments to scaffold individual learning and enhance collaborative learning. *The primary purpose of this project is to compare the achievement of learning outcomes and student perception of learning between an online delivery and a F2F delivery.* The evaluation plan of the proposed study is as follows:

A. Specific Aims
   1. The overall purpose of the project it to study how students perceive the course and its assignments along with their own achievement of learning outcomes in a PFC pedagogy in online delivery versus F2F classroom.
   2. The specific objectives to be achieved are as follows:
       a. Assess student perceptions of a PFC course by comparing F2F with online delivery.
       b. Assess student perceptions of hands-on low-stakes writing tasks to scaffold individual and collaborative learning.
       c. Assess student perceptions of the high-stakes writing assignments and rubrics so as to incorporate best practices regarding scaffolded assignments.
       d. Measure the achievement of learning outcomes while identifying challenges associated with the online delivery.

   3. The specific research questions to be answered as a result of the project are as follow:

a. How have student perceptions been shaped by the mode of delivery of a W course?

b. How does the mode of delivery affect the student perceptions of an online W, PFC with scaffolded writing assignments?

c. How do student perceptions of their achievement of learning outcomes differ between F2F and online delivery?

4. This course expansion aims to increase the number of W-course offerings, specifically with one online section, in order to better serve our student body based on a rationale that is grounded in the missions of the university, the college, and the department.

5. This study has the potential of affecting the entire undergraduate population at UNC Charlotte. All students have to take at least two (2) writing-intensive courses as part of their General Education requirements, and at least one within the major. The findings from this study will afford us an opportunity to gain an insight into best practices for W courses.

V. LITERARY REVIEW

It is generally acknowledged that writing-intensive courses are an important component of the undergraduate curriculum. Particularly, college faculty members and administrators have expressed a growing concern that undergraduate students' writing abilities are not being developed sufficiently (Neuberger-Browers and Donohue 1994). Faculty broadly expresses discontent with these courses because grading is time-consuming (Roost 2003). Similarly for students, although there are multiple reasons why students find writing difficult, Smit (1991) posits that the primary problem is that students receive limited instruction in writing that may not suffice (2). Particularly, in the case of *writing transfer* (where knowledge crosses two disciplines), writing-intensive courses are proven to be considerably challenging since students struggle to be responsive to different audiences in multiples disciplines (Driscoll 2011; Mccartin 2017). Even though it is generally acknowledged that writing-intensive courses are perceived by students as stressful (Neuberger-Browers and Donohue 1994), Lonoff's findings (1994; qtd. in Hawthorne 1998) reveal that writing is valuable for students because it forces them to work harder and engage in analytical and critical thinking. Furthermore, Hilgers et al. (1995) conducted interviews of 82 students and concluded that students perceived writing-intensive

courses as causing improvement in their writing skills, their ability to problem-solve, and their understanding of course material.

In an attempt to address student needs and concerns, we propose that careful planning is done at the course level with the course redesign for SPAN 3019(W), closely guided by best practices from the CxC literature implemented in the W coursework. Specifically, as suggested by George Kuh (2012), we will be attentive to the (i) evolving nature of writing: "writing in the 21st century happens everywhere – offline *and* online – and necessitates greater comfort writing with varied technologies and in multiple genres" (AAC&U's High-Impact Educational Practices); (ii) integration of digital literacies in high-stakes assignment with an e-portfolio technology to teach organization strategies. This helps students to visualize the structures they use and the information hierarchies they have established in their previous writing; (iii) incorporation of scaffolded low-stakes and high-stakes assignments; (iv) with the ultimate goal of creating a digital community of learners targeted to students interested in female voices from Spain and the Americas.

The novelty of the course redesign resides in incorporating such elements of transformative learning in the writing-intensive course as high-stakes assignments that aim at engaging students in the process of drafting and editing while developing higher-level thinking and reflective skills (Elbow 1997). High-stakes assignments are most successful when integrated with low-stakes reflections that address fundamental elements of the writing process. For instance, the implementation of an e-portfolio is an example of effective high-stake assignments where learning is scaffolded from low-stakes assignments that encourage students to build knowledge, receive instructor feedback along with peer review and ultimately create a polished piece of writing. Nevertheless, this method has been heavily criticized for being time-consuming due to comprehensive feedback, compromising instructional time to the teaching of writing skills and overloading the instructor.

In addition to the complexities of integrating scaffolded high-stakes assignments into SPAN 3019W, the added challenge is the implementation of a PFC in an online learning environment. Our goal is to keep the same content of the online and F2F courses along with student interaction and class activities. In fact, this study will particularly allow us to evaluate student perceptions of the PFC where lectures will be flipped and additional time will be used for hands-on writing activities. As an alternative to direct instruction, students will watch video clips

at their own pace in order to initiate the learning process. As part of the online delivery, students will be exposed to modeling, guided practice, discussions and predominantly independent work. While students in the online section complete the newly redesigned assignments (i.e. low-stakes and high-stakes), F2F students are not exposed to the new PFC pedagogy.

Since writing-intensive courses can be challenging and intimidating for students, it will be crucial to understand student perceptions toward the redesigned course and its scaffolded assignments in an online delivery with a PFC pedagogy. Student perceptions "provide a record of progress as well as a guide for any needed changes in the program" (Daugherty and Russo 2011: 321). Student perceptions of W courses can vary significantly depending on the exposure that students may have had to other online coursework. Also, their perceptions may vary if they have taken other W courses during their undergraduate program. Lastly, it is also noted that the literature voiced concerns that student learning outcomes may differ significantly in the F2F vs. online classroom (Koory 2003). Since writing-intensive course enrollments are capped at twenty (20) students, analyzing student perceptions of a W course is an effective means of comprehending student learning and provide insight into opportunities for remedial action.

VI. METHODS AND EVALUATION

In order to investigate the impact of proposed changes in the delivery mode and the redesign, our study will evaluate a total of two groups (sections) enrolled in SPAN 3019(W) during Fall 2019. While one group will be offered a traditional F2F classroom instruction, the other group will serve as a pilot for online delivery of this course. The online course will be designed as per Quality Matters Standards. The two groups will be compared, and the online course will be comprehensively evaluated in its pilot phase. This pilot study will evaluate the PFC pedagogy with a writing intensive component to (i) assess student perceptions of a PFC course by comparing F2F with the online delivery, (ii) assess student perceptions of hands-on low-stakes writing tasks to scaffold student learning and collaborative learning, (iii) redesign the high-stakes writing assignment and rubric so as to incorporate best practices regarding scaffolded assignments, and (iv) measure the achievement of learning outcomes while identifying challenges associated with the online delivery. While there are traditional means of direct assessment that can be used to measure the achievement of specific learning outcomes, it is important to comprehend student perceptions about the achievement of these outcomes. We will

use an approach combining open-ended mid & postcourse questions, pre- and postcourse questionnaires (Brownell, Price, and Steinman 2013). All questionnaires will use five Likert-style blocks of questions that focus on (i) student motivation, (ii) student confidence in communication skills, (iii) student perceptions of writing of Caribbean and Latin American literature, (iv) student attitudes toward online learning, (v) student perception of PFC's activities, and (vi) high-stake assignment. It is particularly helpful to know whether the students themselves believe that the established outcomes are being achieved or not, and also to see the correlation between student perceptions and the assessment data.

The evaluation plan of this proposed study consists of using a performance indicator for each outcome to compare the F2F section and the online section (adapted from Rodriguez-Castro 2018). Direct assessment includes summative assessment that uses student performance in multiple writing assignments. For instance, students will complete low-stakes assignments (relatively smaller written tasks, e.g. paper bibliography, paper introduction) on their own to enhance their writing and critical thinking skills. Subsequently, scaffolded assignments will be designed so that students culminate the course with the submission of a formal and polished written artifact (known as a high-stakes assignment in the literature). Furthermore, we will apply backward design for successful course-module learning objectives alignment and ensure that the objectives are closely aligned with learning activities, materials as well as assignments .We will aim to follow best practices in integrating communication into the curriculum by devising a comprehensive alignment of course objectives with the high-stakes assignment of the course.

The high stakes assignment will be designed to be a culminating experience for the course with a significant portion of the course grade. Specifically, a detailed plan of evaluation will be developed to assess student achievement of learning outcomes in the following mapped assignments:

Assignment & materials	Course Objectives
Research Proposal	1, 2
Annotated Bibliography	1.
Paper Introduction (2-3 pages)	1, 2, 4
Final project - Presentation	3.
Final project - essay (8 pages)	1, 2, 3, 4

Course objectives for SPAN 3019(W):

1. Demonstrate satisfactory knowledge of writing conventions and correctness in the usage of sentences, paragraphs and essay length discourse of at least 2000 words in major time frames.

2. Demonstrate satisfactory knowledge of the audience, the role of the writer, and rhetorical strategies in personal, social, and survival topics.

3. Demonstrate satisfactory knowledge of multiple strategies to convey arguments, main ideas and support/evidence on a variety of topics in such formats as audio/video selections, dialogues, and virtual conversations.

4. Evaluate similarities and differences between cultures, including cultural values of underserved female groups and non-verbal communication behaviors of tolerance for a variety of cultures.

A pre- and post-questionnaire instrument will be developed to comprehend student knowledge before and after (adapted from Grzyb et al. 2018) as well as the effectiveness of the course redesign. Indirect assessment will include questionnaires that address learner perceptions of course effectiveness, assignments, collaborative hands-on tasks, simulations on how to write, peer reviewing, etc.). Additional instruments of data collection will be student self-assessments, and individualized-instruction interviews. Indirect assessment instruments remain crucial elements in order to identify specific challenges and weaknesses resulting from the online delivery in order to perform remedial action. The SoTL grant will allow us to perform exhaustive data collection and analysis. Both quantitative and qualitative data will be collected, and analysis of the data will consist of t-tests to compare the two groups along with descriptive statistics and correlation analysis. The data gathered from the pilot study will afford us the opportunity to identify potential issues vis-à-vis low-stakes and high-stakes assignments and possible issues with student perceptions of learning in an online course. Furthermore, assessment of student perceptions allows instructors to evaluate skill growth (Li et al. 2015, 8-9) while providing a valuable tool for the enhancement of the undergraduate curriculum. This study will also allow us to evaluate the teaching methodology, course materials, and the level of attainment of outcomes for the course. More importantly, this study will afford us the opportunity to comprehend the impact of online learning on a writing intensive course, these lessons can be useful for such a teaching methodology for the program in general.

VII. PROPOSED STUDY TIMELINE

Semester	Objectives
Summer 2019	Finalize IRB requirements. Design instruments for data collection. Planning and logistics for data collection process in two (2) sections.
Fall 2019	Data collection in two (2) sections of SPAN 3019 – direct assessment and pre & mid-course surveys.
Spring 2020	Complete data collection process – post-course surveys. Analysis of data (quantitative and qualitative). Prepare findings for dissemination: presentations and publication.

VIII. DISSEMINATION

Our findings will be disseminated in a myriad of ways. First, we will share our findings internally among the Spanish faculty as well as the Languages and Culture Studies department staff. Second, the findings will be shared externally through presentations at (inter)national conferences (e.g. AATSP - American Association of Teachers of Spanish and Portuguese, SCOLT) and through publication in relevant peer-review journals (*MIFLC Review*, *Foreign Language Annals*).

IX. HUMAN SUBJECTS

All research participants must give their permission (e.g. consent form) to be part of this study. If funded, the author will seek approval of all data collection instruments outlined in this proposal by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at UNC Charlotte.

X. Extramural funding

N/A.

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