

# CASE STUDIES IN ROMANIAN TEACHER EDUCATION: FLIPPED CLASSROOM AND MICROTEACHING OPPORTUNITIES

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## **Abstract:**

*This paper aims to problematize and conceptualize the teaching approaches used by two trainers in the Applied Linguistics MA program at the Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iași, Romania. Data collection was undertaken during the first semester of the academic year 2017-2018 for approximately two months during which I attended the first module of my master's studies as a post-graduate student. The approach adopted combines a conventional literature review with the examination and discussion of two case studies incorporating post-observation field notes and teacher questionnaires for the purpose of triangulating data and methods. The paper lists findings consistent with the idea that the Romanian teacher education program helps trainees develop a reflective stance on their pedagogical practices through micro-teaching and presentation opportunities. Both courses have similar ultimate aims and rely on a non-hierarchical teacher-student relationship, using teaching and presentation sessions embedded in the training classroom to bridge the gap between theory and practice. The ultimate aim of the present study is not to persuade anyone to flip a classroom or let students embark on micro-teaching, but rather to provide potential readers with feasible resources should they decide to modify a university course or a pre-university lesson using one of the approaches described herein.*

**Keywords:** Romanian teacher education; heterarchical student-teacher relationships; flipped classroom; microteaching; loop input.

## **Introduction**

Over the years, educational thinkers, researchers and policy-makers have inevitably come to realize that teachers play a vital role in both instructional change and school improvement. Teachers are no longer considered humble agents in the implementation of a prescribed curriculum. Instead, they are expected to refine and interpret curricular decisions to make learning accessible for pupils. Thus, given the lynchpin role teachers play and the expectations for schools to become the ultimate keys to responsible

citizenship, building a community of professionals in the field has become a top priority.

The purpose of this study is to offer a comprehensive picture of Romanian approaches to the training of future English teachers and illustrate the intricacy underlying the activities and procedures they involve. In order to relate the purpose of the research to supporting theory, this study takes a pragmatic approach to university teaching practices by using post-observation notes, questionnaires and case studies to validate the qualitative paradigm to which it subscribes. The structure of the study helps to mitigate a common dilemma of teacher educators – what can university trainers do to offer student teachers flexibility, independence and self-reliance? Without suitable preparation and supervision, such induced student autonomy can become a liability to learning. This paper is conceived as a way to provide a theoretical profile of trainers and trainees within the broader context of university teaching, using two real-life cases from Romania to show how one of its national training programs based in Iași encourages post-graduate students to participate in a professional community of practice. The academic staff in such a program does not cling to old-age attitudes towards teaching, evaluation and feedback on student writing or oral performance.

Thus, this study holds that alternative assessment procedures replacing the traditional examinations that inquire lower-order skills engage students in the process of reflection and critical response to course content. Successful teacher training, as the following sections will show, relies on the understanding of teaching through the very teaching process. There is hope in believing that the approaches showcased in this paper will become efficient alternatives and not merely fleeting fads for trainers and trainees alike.

This study is set up into three sections. The first considers the overall impact of educational approaches and concepts in university teaching. The second further enriches the discussion begun in the Literature review with important challenges in teacher education programs. The central argument throughout both reflects the idea that trainees' experience as students becomes the bedrock of their future professional identities. The third section argues for the choice of research methods employed (case studies, questionnaires and post-observation notes) to place the present study within the qualitative paradigm. The theories of teacher learning in the second and third sections of this study help to formulate the issue under investigation; the processes described in the section dealing with methodology and actual teaching opportunities for Romanian-born student teachers help to unpack it.

The first case study frames the issue of flipping a Romanian post-graduate training course to dedicate the transmission of knowledge to outside-the-class self-study and hands-on activities such as student presentations in a team-based learning arrangement to in-class time.

Although designing a successful flipped classroom requires from the instructor more forethought than a traditional face-to-face course, this case study tries to see if peer-, self- and end-of-term assessment grids can promote student reflection and become the impetus to get students to combine theory and practice. The second case study, on the other hand, grapples with the complexities and nuances of recursive teaching – teaching within teaching – embedded in a post-university training course using micro-teaching sessions. This case study deals with Romanian master students' experiential journey from the micro-world of training to the macro-world of teaching. It also strives to show how reflecting on the teaching performance of fellow trainees and one's own fosters the development of novice teachers' theories of learning and teaching. The appendices include the two courses' outline, activities, assessment criteria and solutions at the core of their corresponding approaches to university teaching.

Previous national surveys have also dealt with the analysis of possible solutions to improve the training system, such as Potolea & Ciolan's *Teacher Education Reform in Romania: A Stage of Transition* (2003). However, Bîrzea et al.'s (2006) study was included in an international research project called *Enhancing Professional Development of Education Practitioners and Teaching/Learning practices in SEE Countries* and stressed the need to rehabilitate teachers' pedagogical competences and revitalize their practical training. Stăiculescu & Păduraru (2013) claim that the shortcomings of the Romanian initial teacher training system have to do with the relatively long period of studies (6 years), the troublesome filling of teaching positions and the lack of a teacher mentoring organization – all of which require more careful selection procedures and the presence of educational network relationships (Stăiculescu & Păduraru 2013: 784).

Among the weaknesses submitted by Velea & Istrate (2011), the most unfavourable ones are the poor pedagogical training itself, the lack of a genuine system of recruitment for pre-service teachers (as virtually any student gets access to the courses of the Teacher Training Department and obtains a certificate easily) and the absence of motivation for the teaching profession, which is the real driving force of any educational change. Moreover, the teachers are considered to have low social status, mainly due to the low income and the unsettled social and cultural citizen values. The authors argue that a more suitable alternative would be a Master programme dedicated to teacher training instead of the actual training system. Only a limited number of students who hope to dedicate their careers to teaching would register for a two-year programme.

## 1. Literature review

Lectures are probably the archetypal pedagogical format and the most frequent form of instruction in universities nowadays, as reported by Hrepic, Zollman, & Rebello (2007), who involved university students in a study investigating their perception of the content delivered during courses in physics. Additionally, Ali (2011) submitted findings consistent with the idea that specific teaching methods have little catalytic opportunity to establish firm student identities. The learning environment, on the other hand, plays the leading role in the educational process – it should be apt to host different teaching approaches (Ali 2011: 60). The issue of adopting a certain teaching approach has prompted a debate between those in favour of the existence of consequences of different types of teaching experience as opposed to those preferring to ignore them completely.

Universities and other higher education institutions (from now on, HEIs) are seen as both the chief contributors to the generation of lifelong learners and as an aid to lifelong learning in itself – organisationally and didactically. Candy (2000) considers six attributes of the typical long-standing learner from almost one hundred which were identified in the literature: an enquiring mind, ‘helicopter vision’, information literacy, a sense of personal agency, a repertoire of learning skills, as well as interpersonal skills and group membership (Candy 2000: 110). Beyond these, the essential purpose of universities is to impart to its students learning chances away from the walls of the institutions. The author argues that universities should use alternative transmission mechanisms and allow for freedom of choice according to different learning styles students prefer. Another duty is to turn reproductive assessment into transformational learning, as many assessment requirements are guilty of merely testing factual recall. Universities promoting deep-rooted and perennial learning should, on the contrary, accommodate to the intricacy and versatility of real-world, work-related settings and provide constructive feedback that focuses on student progress rather than placing the spotlight on the teacher.

A less admirable array of problems has arisen due to the nonchalance of politicians to provide – and for the ‘clientele’ to welcome – a rich extension of university slots. The inadequacies of their generosity reflect the inability to provide the necessary resources. As a consequence, Hussey & Smith (2002) list several managerial distortions, such as “reduced per capita funding, the removal of student grants, the introduction of tuition fees and loans, and the consequent pressure [for students] to find employment while they study” (Hussey & Smith 2002: 220), all of which have altered the university experience. More concretely, universities have gained merchandising features, as the ‘commodities’ they offer to the ‘purchasers’ have been sliced into concrete, quantitative learning modules, each with its

own assessment components and learning outcomes. The educational process had to become transparently supervised and gauged.

Entwistle et al. (2000) acknowledge the fact that an emphasis on learning outcomes completely disregards unanticipated ideas, skills and connections in HE teaching settings. The authors indicate that spontaneous classroom activities account for more than 60% of teaching events. In their view, any attempts to put the finger on strict learning outcomes contradict effective teaching practices. Recent research proves the contrary in indicating that, higher education learning outcomes have the instrumental function of prompting an increase in student-centered learning. Hughes (2007) attempts, in *Learning about learning or learning to learn (L2L)*, to sketch the concept of ‘learner’ within the context of HE, where ‘selling’ learning to learn (L2L) is crucial to appealing to and preserving incoming students. Both undergraduates and postgraduates are expected to attend lectures, seminars and workshops and mark their professional contribution, to treat the university’s property, teachers and fellow students with respect, to submit assignments in due time and acknowledge and cope with rules and regulations related to the use of borrowed materials and computers (Hughes, 2007:10). This generic university profile gives concrete details about the learners’ roles and responsibilities within HEIs. The author comments on the lack of details as to how the quality of teaching should ensure the education of citizens in order to materialize the development of an efficient workforce.

## **2. Main challenges in teacher education**

In devising teacher training courses, institutions are obliged to take burdensome decisions regarding the structure and content of the courses, school experience or teaching opportunities within the schedule of the classes, the roles of teacher educators and trainees and teacher supervision demands. Such decisions seem to be based on “the intuition or craft wisdom of the teacher educator, built up over several years, or upon prevailing ideologies within education” (Calderhead & Shorrock 1997: 8). When different decisions are made to improve teacher training – focusing on school experience, altering the conventional structure of a course, shifting teacher educators’ and students’ role to deal with pedagogical issues, letting subject didactics take over subject matter – a theoretical framework of the teacher educator’s approach is required, which would enable individuals interested in teacher development to correlate the experience of trainees with their own practice and single out the factors shaping their growth. The more one is acquainted with the training instruments that influence this growth, the more able he is to fabricate models of teacher education based on beneficial approaches tried and tested in the training and induction of teachers.

Apparently, ‘teacher training’ and ‘teacher education’ are used interchangeably in the literature. For Donald Freeman (1989), ‘teacher training’ and ‘teacher development’ exist in a semiotic form and become the seeds of the quality of education in the classroom. Training is defined as a “strategy for direct intervention by the collaborator, to work on specific aspects of the teacher’s teaching” (Freeman 1989: 39), while development is considered a “strategy of influence and indirect intervention that works on complex, integrated aspects of teaching [which] are idiosyncratic and individual” (Freeman, 1989: 40). Freeman further captures the complexity of ‘teaching teaching’ through a triangular relationship between teacher educators, teacher-students and content, describing the multiple perspectives at the heart of designing teachertraining courses. One cannot single out specific roles and positions in language teacher education. Practice teaching lessons may consist of a “nerve-wracking, mercifully brief, live teaching performance by the teacher learner” or may be concentrated on a “proforma 15 minutes of stand-up and talk teaching for the teacher learner” (Freeman 2016: 15), where the trainer is the fulcrum of the educational process.

Several findings can be summarized after reviewing the literature on teacher training. First and foremost, incoming teachers give prominence to personal experience and reflection during their pre-service and in-service training. A great deal of teacher knowledge is conveyed within the university context, which probably holds true for any profession. On the other hand, without effective instruction, novice teachers will preserve the way they were taught and apply it to their own teaching. However, the participation pathways of incoming teachers as learners and student teachers may not differ markedly – their teacher educators may continue to use the expository teaching mode and deem it irreplaceable, which introduces one to a catch-22 situation. How can novice teachers prompt student progress by using participatory methods of teaching and learning without having been exposed to anything other than formal teaching? Such questions lend themselves to no straightforward answers.

### **3. Methodology**

Bîrzea et al.’s (2006) survey revisited the role of the pre-service training system in teachers’ professional development. They discovered that, although most teachers viewed their teaching qualifications obtained during the psycho-pedagogical module as an adequate criterion for being able to enter the profession, they indicated that there is a need for “a lot of practical teaching experiences and in-service education and training”, with many of them feeling that the training system should be “radically reformed” (Bîrzea et al. 2006: 454). They commented on the need for study programs providing

all key competencies for teachers (subject knowledge, education knowledge, practical experience).

### **The tools**

The teaching approaches explored in this study are context-specific, having been used in a post-graduate programme which pleads for the same goals suggested by Velea & Istrate (2011) – the Applied Linguistics (Teaching English as a Second or Foreign Language) MA teacher training programme at the Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iași, Romania. As the main objective of this paper is to produce qualitative data, it looks at aspects of continuous teacher development in a Romanian academic establishment to focus on purposes, participants and the underlying principles in language teacher training since theory and research are not enough to capture the puzzling dynamics of a skillful teaching performance. Nor would just a literature review about teaching at the university-level or models of teacher education greatly help inexperienced teachers increase their competence. Wallace (2000), in his article *The case for case studies*, argues that case studies have not generally corresponded to professional development in the field of teacher learning (p. 17), which may be seen as a shortcoming of qualitative researchers' inquiries, as such research tools (especially documented case studies written by someone enunciating the details of his or her own experiences, activities and analysis) are useful precisely because they equip teacher development studies with both circumstantial and student teacher- or teacher-generated material (Richards 1998: xii).

Since this paper is, in fact, based on my own experience as a master's student in her pre-service teacher training period and that of my trainers (as shown in the teacher's questionnaires) and colleagues (as illustrated by the student evaluations and micro-teaching lesson plans), it is undoubtedly limited to personal accounts of teacher training practices. Nevertheless, the organization of the present study has tried to flag the parts of the text that result from research and those that are based on personal accounts of teaching events. Although the case studies are numbered in sequence, they do not have to be read in order, as each is self-contained.

### **Participants**

The four trainers were involved in the study in confidential and anonymous conditions. The first trainer (henceforth T<sub>1</sub>) has been a member of the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures at the Faculty of Letters, UAIC, since 1996. Her research interests include (but are not limited to) English morpho-syntax, translation, academic writing for research and methodology at BA level and instructional technologies and foreign language acquisition and learning at MA level. The second trainer (T<sub>2</sub>) has had over a

decade of experience in teaching English Linguistics and Applied Linguistics at the Faculty of Letters. All Romanian students enrolled in the two courses had a Bachelor degree with an English Major or Minor of 180 ECTS credits. 18 Romanian trainees initially took the two courses – *Theories and Approaches to TEFL* and *Foreign Language Acquisition and Learning*. By the end of the time allotted to the courses, the number of students diminished to 15, as three of them chose to withdraw from the MA program. In considering the extent to which the present student sample is representative for the training of English teachers in Romania, one issue must be considered. Individual differences are very likely to have arisen in other teaching contexts (either in the past or in other cities and countries). As the intent of this paper is not a compilation of statistical exemplary data, but an individual perspective on teaching approaches characterizing one specific Romanian teacher training program, the trainee and trainer samples can be considered relevant for the purpose of this study.

### **Time frames**

Thus, the informative phase of the study was conducted across one semester. In Romania, the academic year starts the first week of October and ends in June the following year. The autumn semester, thus, begins in October and ends in January. The two university courses – *Theories and Approaches to TEFL* and *FL Acquisition and Learning* – were attended for seven weeks during the first module embedded in the first semester of the academic year 2017-2018. The piloting of the research tools was done during the first module within the first and fourth semesters of the MA in Applied Linguistics in Romania, when post-observation classroom reports and home-university trainers' responses to questionnaires were collected. The entire research phase of the paper focused on constructing two case studies contextualizing and illustrating the teaching approaches adopted by two trainers at the aforementioned university. The case studies constructed yield the post-observation insights collected in the pilot stage of the study, that is, during the training. Additionally, the qualitative trainer questionnaires were used to capture the peculiarity of each training approach. Questionnaires ensured a second level of interpretation and were used to reduce the emergence of partially objective research views and to obtain an authentic insight into the Romanian instructors' experience with the two approaches to teaching highlighted by the case studies. The aggregation of data from post-observation notes and teacher responses to questionnaires will unambiguously add up to generate a more complete picture of the teacher education system in Romania.



### Teacher questionnaires and interpretation of responses

The following teacher questionnaire was used to elicit respondents' perceptions about their teaching approach at university-level:

- *What are the essential features of your teaching exposition? Does it concentrate on student learning or the giving of information?*
- *Which of the following teaching styles (Barnes, 1987) reflects your approach to teaching:*
  - *a closed approach (tightly controlled by the lecturer, relying on worksheets, note-taking, individual exercises, extended reading and routine practical work)*
  - *a framed approach (students engage in individual/group work, problem-solving, and discussion of outcomes; the lecturer makes formal decisions about topics, tasks and teaching criteria)*
  - *a negotiated approach (the content is discussed at each point and students have a role in decision-making; teaching is facilitated by group and class discussions)?*
- *How are late submissions dealt with within the lectures/seminars that you are teaching?*
- *What strategies do you use to guarantee that starting, transitioning and ending points in your lectures/seminars run smoothly?*
- *Are your students instructed on how the learning sessions are to be conducted?*
- *Do your teaching objectives include the mission of turning students into autonomous learners?*
- *How often do you use questioning and discussion? Do you nominate individual students to respond to your questions?*
- *How do you respond to student errors?*
- *Do you include technological tools into your teaching?*
- *How would you like to change or develop your teaching philosophy in the future?*

This qualitative teacher questionnaire contains nine open-ended questions (more suitable to capture the uniqueness of each teaching approach) and one closed question (the second question) meant to prescribe the type of responses from which the instructors could choose so as to fit the types of approaches used by T<sub>1</sub> and T<sub>2</sub>, as predicted by the case studies.

The Romanian trainers, however, despite the nature of the closed questions, added remarks and additional explanations to the three categories proposed by the second question. The open-ended questions allowed the submission of free responses and enabled the trainers to avoid the

conventional restraints of pre-set categories of questionnaire items. The challenge was that, indeed, the instructors' responses to the nine open-ended questions were much more difficult to decode and classify. Thus, research data extracted from post-observation notes and converted into four case studies was supplemented by the four trainers' responses to the aforementioned questionnaire, designed to assess the strength of the assumptions made throughout the last section of this thesis. T<sub>1</sub> and T<sub>2</sub> were asked about their experience, beliefs and significant events that occurred in their training sessions. The questionnaire data was ultimately used to guard the research against being influenced by student prejudices.

The two Romanian trainers usually provide pre-course readings to help students focus on in-class observations and to offer an advance organizer for course input. T<sub>1</sub> declares taking the flipped class approach to teaching, being "in charge of the discussion and [...] calling students for answers, thus directing them through the lessons". Trainees are offered space for digressive thought, as "instructional content is delivered outside the classroom". The Romanian trainers' focus is on student self-directed learning rather than on the transmission of information. In T<sub>2</sub>'s class, students "get their information from the recommended bibliography". As a result, self-study is adopted as an integral part of the course.

T<sub>1</sub> considers that MA students have different learning needs and admits having used a negotiated approach at the master's level. Indeed, T<sub>1</sub>'s teaching is facilitated by group and class discussions. Trainees are placed in teams to enable reflective discussions and provide peer support. However, with BA students, T<sub>1</sub> usually adopts a combination of the closed and framed approaches to teaching. T<sub>2</sub>'s response to the closed question of the questionnaire indicates a preference for the framed approach to teaching, as she makes formal decisions about topics, tasks and teaching criteria. There are, however, "occasional moments of students' decision-making: students participate in both individual and group work, problem solving, discussion of outcomes". According to T<sub>2</sub>, "learning (rather than teaching) is facilitated by class discussion on a regular basis". T<sub>2</sub>'s response is consistent with the main feature underlying her approach – the step-by-step trial-and-error teaching process. During these trials, trainees need support as they encounter unpredictable problems, teaching dilemmas, affective blocks, self-doubt and confusion.

T<sub>1</sub> acknowledges the recent use of two learning management systems – Turnitin and Edmodo – which have shifted the manner in which she handles late submissions, as students can no longer upload any assignment after the due date. However, T<sub>1</sub> delivers "clear course policies at the beginning of the term, so students know exactly what they need to meet the deadlines if they want to submit a complete portfolio". Thus, course policies

are public, known to trainees and not withheld by the trainer or the HEI. Course policies also make assessment criteria open to students from the outset of the course. By using the portfolio assessment tool, trainers' evaluative judgments are reached using a fair sample of the student-teachers' performance as adequate evidence of what they can do. Instead, T<sub>2</sub> tends to "insist on students' timely submissions by setting clear guidelines". Although late submissions are eventually accepted, trainees' grades might be diminished as a consequence.

In terms of the strategies used to guarantee that starting, transitioning and ending points in the lectures/seminars run smoothly, both T<sub>1</sub> and T<sub>2</sub> use changes in intonation, marker words (i.e., *Well...*, *Right...*, *OK...*, *Now...*, *So...*) and phrases (i.e., *let's move on to ...*, *Well, that being said, let's have a look at ...*, *Having considered ... let's move on to consider ...*, etc.) and body language to indicate the turning points in terms of lecture sections. T<sub>2</sub> tends to "follow the flow of the lesson, rather than stick to [her] intended timing", while T<sub>1</sub> uses a richer repertoire of strategies, including references to previous lectures/recommended readings, the provision of the central points of the lecture, the use of examples, digressions, reiteration and summarizing. Both Romanian trainers instruct students on how the learning sessions are to be conducted at the outset of the course whether by providing a document containing course policies (T<sub>1</sub>) or by discussing expectations for student behavior (T<sub>2</sub>). Whenever changes or adjustments intervene, the reasons are, nevertheless, made clear.

Both the flipped and the micro-teaching approaches to teaching are centered on the idea of turning students into autonomous learners. T<sub>1</sub> serves as a mentor and facilitator of reflection, allowing students to assess strengths and weaknesses and make practical use of the assessment, avoiding being trapped in a narrow feedback loop. T<sub>1</sub> explains her option for the flipped class approach as being "the best teaching-learning environment for [turning students into autonomous learners], combined with promoting self-reflection and self-assessment", as she places initiative and responsibility with the trainee. On the same note, T<sub>2</sub> addresses the need to develop trainees' expertise by direct experience and conscious reflection on the experience they undergo, as the rehearsal of classroom skills or the so-called "simulations" are "meant, among other things, to encourage students to play the teacher's roles and become aware of how these roles are perceived by classmates through the feedback received regularly". Thus, self-reflection and autonomy play a pivotal role in T<sub>2</sub>'s classes.

In the two Romanian trainers' classes, students contribute to the rethinking of personal change, as "discussions and feedback sessions are organized at the end of each simulation", with questions generally addressed to the whole group, although "some are directly addressed to the

student/students” who played the teacher’s role in the micro-teaching session (T<sub>2</sub>). T<sub>1</sub> uses questioning and discussion throughout her teaching sessions and nominates individual students “mostly when nobody volunteers”. In the two courses taught by T<sub>1</sub> and T<sub>2</sub>, students are trained to generate a descriptive lexicon and absorb the terminology specific to each. T<sub>1</sub> and T<sub>2</sub> urge students to produce a personal pedagogic manifesto – either orally or in written form – a statement of principles and beliefs, which peers could listen to/read and discuss. This is particularly useful to provide a baseline against which to compare personal development at a later stage.

Depending on the type of errors the students make, T<sub>1</sub> applies the appropriate correction strategy. T<sub>2</sub>’s approach is consistent with the idea that, for development to occur, trainees need consistent follow-up on the errors made. T<sub>2</sub> tends to ignore most of the language errors, although sometimes she notes them down and passes the note to the student at the end of the lesson. However, she feels the need to “correct pronunciation errors which would make the mispronounced word unintelligible to a native speaker” and tries to address the error in a gentle or funny manner. As today’s students regularly engage with a very diverse range of technology, T<sub>1</sub> adopts technology-driven practices in her teaching and “strongly favor[s] a blended approach”, being aware that, in the contemporary context for language teaching, the introduction of ICTs together with a well-informed pedagogy offers the potential for an increased focus on the student and a change in the role of the trainer to one of facilitator and manager of students’ learning outside and inside the classroom. Although T<sub>2</sub> is aware that blended instruction increases self-directed learning, her “use of technology during the course is limited, but many simulated lessons involve the use of IT”.

The two Romanian instructors have a well-established teaching philosophy they constantly rely on, a teaching approach developed with experience. T<sub>1</sub> and T<sub>2</sub> do not subscribe to the idea of changing their teaching philosophy in the future, not because of set-in-stone beliefs and attitudes towards teacher training, but because one cannot “plan changes in philosophy, but can remain open to change” (T<sub>2</sub>).

#### **4. Presentation and analysis of evidence**

The *Applied Linguistics – Teaching English as a Foreign Language* MA program targets teachers of English and/or graduate students without prior teaching experience planning to build a career in this direction. It provides trainees with a detailed understanding of how English works and how languages are learned and taught. The MA program offers the following courses:

Semester no.	Module 1	Module 2
1 <sup>st</sup> semester	Theories and Approaches to TEFL FL Acquisition and Learning School Experience	Linguistics for EFL Teachers I The Role of Literature in ELT School Experience
2 <sup>nd</sup> semester	Testing and Evaluation EFL Methodology School Experience	School Management Linguistics for EFL Teachers II School Experience
3 <sup>rd</sup> semester	Teaching Technology in EFL EFL Methodology and New Developments in Teaching School Experience	Materials Evaluation, Design and Adaptation Research Methods in FLT School Experience
4 <sup>th</sup> semester	Teaching Strategies Learning English in a United Europe	FLT from a Psycholinguistic Perspective EFL Classroom Pragmatics and Discourse
<hr/> Research and Preparation for the MA Conference Paper and for the Diploma Paper		

## 5. Case study I: The flipped classroom

### The guiding theory behind the teaching approach

This case study showcases T<sub>1</sub>'s pedagogical practice of 'flipping' a post-graduate class of MA students. The call for course redesign to alter the principles of the traditional classroom and adapt them to hold students accountable for attendance, active participation and engagement in class activities integral to the flipped teaching format has been enthusiastically embraced by professional institutions, as shown by Herreid & Schiller (2013) and Green, Banas, & Perkins (2017).

Trainees benefit from their first learning exposure prior to classes and engage in active learning during scheduled class time through presentations, analysis, problem-solving, synthesizing and assessment tasks. As trainees review text material before class, designated class time is devoted to trainees' team-presentation of information in a mini-lecture format. Shifting trainer and trainee roles in a training program is not the equivalent of reinventing the wheel (although some academics believe that teaching behaviour relies completely on formal lecturing), but it does involve looking at teaching from another perspective to be able to reinvent its procedures. Most trainees

enrolled in this course come with laid-back assumptions about the nature of university teaching. They expect a passive learning experience based on the diligent note-taking and multiple-choice examinations they were previously habituated with. Instead, T<sub>1</sub> adopts a teaching approach meant to recruit trainees into the professional guild of reflective practitioners.

To fully execute an effective flipped course, T<sub>1</sub> includes ICTs and alternative forms of assessment. The instructor departs from the conventional teacher-made text-dense PowerPoint slides that endanger student learning. Instead, she prompts students' understanding of self-experience and group dynamics by empowering them to undertake research outside the confines of the class and prepare for learning experiences that include delivering team-presentations and engaging in peer- and self-assessment. The centrality of the teacher and learner autonomy are no longer in rivalry.

The philosophy underlying T<sub>1</sub>'s approach is one of apprenticeship and learning guidance in a teachers-teaching-future teachers framework of developing expertise through reversed trainer and trainee roles. Through such reversal of roles, the community of practice itself is constantly extended and renewed. T<sub>1</sub> provides a model for an innovative approach to assessment and final examinations that uses marking sheets (rubrics) and portfolio design with first-year TEFL MA students.

### **Description of activities**

The basic chronology of each week follows a fixed pattern designed to make trainees convert the initial encounter with content material into concrete activities initiated by teams after their presentations in a dialogic fashion. The course outline points to book chapters that students must read and understand to convey them to fellow trainees and reflect on their implication (as illustrated in Appendix A).

- Teacher pre-course preparation

T<sub>1</sub> sets forth the guidelines for student portfolios, chunking the material into manageable compartments for students to process the course content. The instructor e-mails a written 'tour' version of the course before the classes begin and outlines the flipped class structure during the first week meeting, pointing to rubrics for evaluation and portfolio design purposes. The final portfolio students are required to submit via e-mail comprises the journal entries and end-of-chapter questions included in Brown's (2000) *Principles of Language Learning and Teaching*, along with their PowerPoint/Prezi presentations and self-, peer- and end-of-term-assessment rubrics.

- Teacher provision of peer-, self- and end-of-term-assessment grids

Each presentation based on Brown's (2000) *Principles of Language Learning and Teaching* book sections is structured as a multi-layered task envisaging the teacher training classroom as a team. Each pair is guided by the objectives of the micro-tasks included within the presentation guidelines:

- Getting students to think critically about the message of the book sections and to relate it to their prior knowledge of the topic and to what they are studying
- Having students use appropriate resources and media for making and delivering presentations

Involving students in assessment by having them give feedback on fellow trainees' presentations, evaluate their team's fair division of labour and assess their own performance encourages them to involve themselves as contributors and evaluators of the learning process (see sample student responses to self- and peer-assessment grids in Appendix B). Self-assessment also provides the additional benefit of allowing students to be their own astringent critics.

For each MA student, the flipped classroom experience leads to a revision of attitudes towards teaching and practice-based activities (as seen in the student sample presented in Appendix C).

- Delivering PPT/Prezi presentations

For a joint presentation to be effective, team members must meet on a regular basis and plan its delivery and the electronic tools to be used. They are able to preview the structure of the presentation through the guidelines initially put forward by the instructor at the outset of the semester.

- Receiving oral instructor- and peer-feedback

It is standard practice in this flipped class for each team-presentation to be followed by debriefing sessions which create a student forum for discussion and negotiation. Each debriefing session provides cyclical opportunities for fellow students to learn how to configure their projects and refine their presentation techniques. Learning guidance in face-to face instruction is now based on the trainees' opportunities to receive on-the-spot instructor- and peer-feedback.

- Completing end-of-chapter questions and learner diaries

Trainees' answers to textbook end-of-chapter questions and learner diaries function as an instrument for monitoring learner output. They must brainstorm, share and review classroom procedures and language, learning and teaching principles and techniques.

- Portfolio construction as a means of promoting a climate for self-reflection

One of the aims of adopting portfolio construction as a vehicle for evaluation is the stimulation of recall. Students need to draw on prior knowledge gained during the previous weeks in class, as well as on the ideas emerging from face-to-face discussions after the presentations. It proves problematic when students miss classes as the semester progresses.

### **Implementation**

Self-assessment, peer-assessment and end-of-term student evaluations engage trainees in a more detailed, ongoing introspection of their own learning. They are trained to integrate theory, observation and practice in compiling portfolios as vehicles for reflection on other trainees' performance and their own. This course is intended as trainees' first step in developing a professional portfolio of practice, which might help them when they take a full-time teaching position after their studies. The activities trainees complete as part of their work over the semester are closely linked to the learning outcomes of the course. By the end of the course, trainees are expected to change their attitude toward the assessment and become responsible for their own professional development and reconsider their beliefs about the classic relationship between teacher educators and trainees.

## **6. Case study II: Team-microteaching as loop input**

### **The guiding theory behind the teaching approach**

The *Theories and Approaches to TEFL* course is conceived as an alternative to the traditional school-based teaching practicum. The main goal of this course is to increase students' job readiness levels, and to stretch their abilities by appointing them to a position of delegated authority in the training room. Trainees receive support from the instructors, from peers in whole-class discussions and from collaboration through pair work in the co-teaching task itself. The idea of engaging trainees in a micro-world of teaching through scaffolded practice largely adheres to the experiential learning approach proposed by Tessa Woodward's (1991) alignment of the process and the content of learning.

As student and teacher roles are often interpreted hierarchically at the university level, T<sub>2</sub> uses Woodward's concept of "loop input" to invite prospective teachers to plunge straight into the *how* and the *what* of teaching simultaneously. The instructor running this post-graduate course chooses to depart from the lecture-based approach to training and selects a more motivating context for trainees to experience multiple roles – as foreign language learners, teachers and post-graduate students. Micro-teaching



attempts to detach itself from the conventional relationship type HEIs usually promote by placing the student at the bottom of the hierarchy, each category still preserving its role in the “stack”, in the author’s terms (Woodward 1991: 5). Individuals can simultaneously belong to different levels of the stack, as trainees can be both non-native speakers of English and students of TEFL. The instructional interventions specific to micro-teaching sessions introduce the idea of recursion – teaching within teaching – in this TEFL training program. The vehicle used to convey the content (the knowledge and skills to be taught) is the process itself (how the knowledge and skills are taught).

Although micro-lessons require structured student participation and pre-specified tasks, any individual in the stack can learn from any other individual in the stack (as a learner, trainee or trainer). Micro-teaching is based on an open process in which all the teaching constraints and the decision-making procedures are made visible to the trainees, as a way of confronting and discussing teaching misconceptions and ineffective techniques and strategies. In this recursive teaching framework, trainees first take on the role of the teacher (while the other trainees pretend to be foreign language learners) and participate in teacher- and student-led activities. The same trainees discuss the micro-lesson and critique the way it was delivered after they go back to being just TEFL student teachers. The instructor serves as an “ambassador of the program” (Bailey 2006: 240) to training sessions where students do the teaching part, building bridges between theory, research and the reality of classroom teaching. Through nondirective intervention, T<sub>2</sub> supports trainees’ reflective endeavours even when they found it difficult to ponder upon their teaching.

In this micro-teaching course, trainees are able to reflect on their teaching and self-evaluate their progress. They carry out both reflection-in-action (by responding to events in the classroom on the spot and adjusting decision-making to promote interaction) and reflection-on-action (which occurs after the micro-teaching event or even before and is undertaken by both the students who do the teaching and by the students who observe the teaching). Whole-class discussions at the end of one’s micro-teaching performance usually include context-bound difficulties of theory and practice and learning goals that have received attention or have been ignored.

### **Description of activities**

The students are expected to apply the theories learnt in the lectures or during the seminars by comparing various methods and approaches and identifying their main characteristics in order to join a community of reflective practice (the way this course is timetabled is illustrated in Appendix D).

- The briefing

Trainees receive instructional guidelines related to a series of language teaching methods – the Grammar-Translation Method, the Direct Method, the Audio-Lingual Method, the Silent Way, Desuggestopedia, Community Language Learning, Total Physical Response, Communicative Language Teaching and the Task-based Approach – and their use in teacher education. They are instructed by the tutor on the features of the scaled-down teaching events they will perform (such as the simplified and specific nature of the teacher's task, the shortened length of the lesson and the reduced class size). Students become acquainted with Diane Larsen Freeman's (2000) book, *Techniques and Principles in Language Teaching*, to understand the teaching/learning process involved in each method and how to integrate theory (the principles underlying each method) and practice (the techniques associated with the methods proposed by Freeman).

- The teaching

Two teachers-to-be are placed in a team-teaching arrangement. They coach each other and synchronize their teaching acts as they start making decisions for themselves. The interface between the trainer and trainees is no longer an uneven encounter, although students initially bring with themselves atavistic notions of how the trainer-trainee relationship is likely to unfold. Students are given a week to experiment with and co-produce lesson planning and follow-up actions. They need to build up a forum for discussion to negotiate the nature of the activities and techniques involved in their lesson plans. At the outset of their micro-lesson, trainees announce which proficiency level they are teaching and ask fellow trainees to act accordingly.

For instance, the team in charge of demonstrating a lesson based on the Audio-Lingual Method has to consider the goals of the teachers who use the Audio-Lingual Method, the roles of the teachers and students, the characteristics of the learning/teaching process, the nature of student-teacher and teacher-student interaction, how the feelings of the students are dealt with, how language and culture are viewed, the language skills emphasized, the role of the students' native language, how evaluation is accomplished and how the teacher should respond to student errors. The trainees try to describe each step taken in their teaching and consider the salient principles and techniques associated with each method. All the stages of the lesson have been preserved, although the tasks have been trimmed and the amount of time shortened (25 minutes per student).

- The debriefing

The goals and the outcome of the micro-lessons are discussed by the trainee, the trainer and fellow trainees. Following the lesson plan of the class

they taught/observed, they make observations concerning the extent to which the principles and techniques of each method have been accurately and innovatively implemented. The denouement of the training session lies in the conclusions drawn by the group as a whole and the comments each trainee makes as to how he/she would change the unfolding of teaching events and to which remedial work he/she would undergo.

- The re-teaching

Usually, if there is enough course time available for trainees in a TEFL program, they attempt to teach the micro-lesson again, modifying it so as to match the suggestions and recommendations received.

### **Implementation**

Trainees enrolled in this teacher training program can concentrate on a single teaching method or skill at a time and closely monitor their performance, adjusting their techniques along the way if necessary. Both the content and the process of teaching are brought to the fore at the same time in a mock-teaching experience. No other experiential approach grants students the freedom to participate in lengthy discussions based on their own performance after the actual teaching event.

### **7. Discussion of results and research limitations**

No amount of instructor talk about language, teaching and learning would have meant anything; if, at the end of the day, the training of student teachers described in the first case study were divorced from the reality of the classroom. After all, hardly anyone would wish to expose themselves to surgery, for instance, conducted by ‘professionals’ who were only lectured on how to cut the human body to remove diseased organs. Highly-qualified teachers and surgeons alike must have been exposed to a trainee-centered approach and gained their qualifications after individual and group involvement in teacher-structured activities. One positive aspect put forward by the first case study is that the teacher training flipped classroom model it showcased successfully integrated student collaboration, active and team-based learning, increasing the extent to which prospective teachers adopt a student-focused approach to their own teaching and granting students with rehearsal opportunities for future projects and end-of-studies thesis defense. Although people have a general tendency to be lenient, trainees eliminated any potential biases in assessing their own work through a reflective approach for self-development prompted by the instructor. Thus, students combined oral presentations with ICTs to adapt to the challenges of today’s computer-mediated communication.

The *Theories and Approaches to TEFL* courses were rather like cooking lessons. They provided an alternative to learning through trial and error – through ending up with one’s dish undercooked or through the misfortune of dealing with a still frozen chicken, when pressure in the student’s ‘kitchen’ inevitably turns into a failed, ill-conceived experiment to ponder upon later in order to improve one’s cooking abilities. Not even the biggest culinary library can train aspiring chefs as well as exclusive hands-on practice by unnecessarily setting the smoke detector off, mixing up condiments, over-seasoning or boiling instead of simmering. Similarly, trainees might not be able to understand teaching methods and reflect on personal teaching experience by merely reading books on methodology and self-training materials. They need their instructors to promote reflective practice opportunities and to integrate them into the professional discourse community through practical tips and feedback.

Unfortunately, one inadequacy related to the micro-teaching course examined in the second case study lies in the inconsistency of peer-feedback. Trainees sometimes try to buffer fellow trainees from harsh criticism. Another of its shortcomings is concerned with the very presence of the trainer – which might influence the behaviour of the trainees, who would choose another repertoire of techniques in different, less ‘strict’ circumstances. As most trainees were inexperienced, the instructor could anticipate some tensions between their expectations and the demands of the course. However, whole-class discussions following micro-teaching sessions indicated a positive attitude towards the teaching opportunities trainees received, as they helped them build new schemata concerning the methods and approaches commonly used in English language teaching.

The present study and its resulting hypotheses and conclusions should, nevertheless, be submitted to criticism and further research that tests out its procedures. The flipped classroom and the micro-teaching approaches described herein are not the be-all and end-all of the academic establishment, nor do they claim to be. The present research is, ultimately, context-specific and, thus, of limited generalizability. It may still be of interest and value to fellow national and international professionals working in or enrolled in similar pre-service teacher-training programs or “lay” readers wishing to leaf through research on Romanian teacher education. By addressing fundamental aspects of continuing professional development, the present study may, I hope, spark off a cross-examination of teaching approaches adopted by higher education institutions offering pre-service training all over the map.

Another weakness of the present study is that it is almost entirely based on personal observation and data and on the subjective experience of two experienced academics training students to become teachers. Other courses, questionnaires and case studies conducted along wider temporal

periods may provide greater insight into the advancement of professional training in Romania as a whole. Recent developments in foreign language training may also benefit other researchers interested in the topic in many unanticipated ways.

### **Conclusions**

The first case study framing the examination of a flipped Romanian post-graduate training course has shown that the transmission of knowledge can fall back on outside-the-class self-study and hands-on activities such as student presentations in a team-based learning arrangement to in-class time. Although designing a successful flipped classroom requires from the instructor more forethought than a traditional face-to-face course, this case study tries to see if peer-, self- and end-of-term assessment grids can promote reflection and become the impetus to get students integrate theory and practice. The second case study, grappling with the complexities and nuances of recursive teaching – teaching within teaching – embedded in a post-university training course has also indicated that simulated lessons and reflection on simulated classroom events can prove a jump-off point for the further development of pre-service student teachers. The Romanian MA students enrolled in both courses, however, embark on an experiential journey from the micro-world of training to the macro-world of teaching. The results of both case studies similarly show how reflecting on the teaching performance of fellow trainees and one's own fosters the development of novice teachers' personal theories of learning and teaching.

The present study has tried to demonstrate that, for the English student-teachers at the Alexandru Ioan Cuza University, the day-to-day training system means classroom experimentation. The Romanian trainees are given choices over their own learning in connection with the learning processes they are engaged in. This can easily be seen in the trainers' use of cohort-based learning strategies, alternative assessment procedures, as well as students' extended opportunities for simulation. The Romanian teacher education program helped trainees develop a reflective stance on their pedagogical practices of their simulated lessons and presentations.

In the two Romanian courses, as seen in the previous case studies, knowledge is constructed as a result of the partnership between trainer and trainees, in which the collectively established knowledge base is demonstrated in practice. However, the sample used in this study is reduced in comparison with the total number of courses attended by Romanian trainees enrolled in the two-year MA program. For such reasons, conducting a longitudinal study over the course of the four semesters of each program and analysing the teaching approaches of all the instructors involved in the training of prospective teachers would be useful to extract information not

just from specific courses, but from the teaching practices of the academics involved in the two teacher education programs.

As the questionnaire responses tackled in study have shown, the two Romanian trainers place a great emphasis on students' need to take stock of their university practice and work to uncover and make explicit the personal theories that underlie it. For them, learning through reflection is a prerequisite for development, which is not seen as a one-off or short-term process. T<sub>1</sub> and T<sub>2</sub> tried to initiate reflection early in the course and then work consistently to support individual developments in classroom procedures. The questionnaire responses previously presented in the Methodology section of this paper are consistent with the hypotheses put forward by the case studies.

The global conclusion of this study, after reviewing the masters' program discussed thus far, is that Romanian trainees receive micro-teaching and presentation opportunities to develop practical teaching skills. More concretely, the results confirm the hypothesis that in Romania, the ongoing evaluation system equips trainees with practical classroom skills. The program relies on a non-hierarchical teacher-student relationship and focuses on training reflective practitioners. It is ultimately based on the concept of recursion, where students' teaching and presentation sessions are embedded within the training classroom to bridge the gap between theory and practice.

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### Appendix A. The Flipped Classroom – Course Outline

	Presentation Topics
Week 1	Chapter 10 – Toward a Theory of Second Language Acquisition (Brown, 2000)
Week 2	Chapter 1 – Language, Learning, and Teaching (Brown, 2000)
Week 3	-
Week 4	Chapter 2 – First Language Acquisition (Brown, 2000) Chapter 3 – Age and Acquisition (Brown, 2000)
Week 5	Chapter 4 – Human Learning (Brown, 2000) Chapter 5 – Styles and Strategies (Brown, 2000) Chapter 6 – Personality Factors (Brown, 2000)
Week 6	Chapter 7 – Sociocultural Factors (Brown, 2000) Chapter 8 – Communicative Competence (Brown, 2000)
Week 7	Chapter 9 – Cross-Linguistic Influential and Learner Language (Brown, 2000)

**Time:** Saturdays, 8.00-12.00

**Course readings:** Brown, D. H. (2000). *Principles of Language Learning and Teaching*. New York: Longman, Inc.

**Additional reading:** Lightbown, P. M. & Spada, N. (2013). *How languages are learned*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

### Appendix B. Student responses to peer- and self-assessment grids

#### SELF-ASSESSMENT (individual work)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Did you enjoy working on the presentation? Why?</li> </ul>	<p><i>I enjoyed converting myself from someone who was terrified of standing up in front of an audience and delivering a presentation into someone who cherishes planning a presentation and then delivering it.</i></p> <p><i>I liked organizing the overall content of the chapter and narrowing it down to some key points worth remembering.</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Do you find this kind of activity useful?</li> </ul>	<p><i>This kind of activity stimulated my slide-design abilities and enhanced my capacity to focus on the</i></p>



<p>Argue.</p>	<p><i>core themes of a chapter.</i></p> <p><i>The challenge to pare the information down to its essentials involved the usage of critical-thinking skills and our careful crafting of the "take-home message" for our audience.</i></p> <p><i>It was a great opportunity to boost my confidence and to work on the verbal delivery of a presentation. The ultimate test - the audience's feedback - made me realize the effects of social support and positive reinforcement (one of the key concepts I had to deal with during my research). It involved a way of collecting information and a kind of self-assessment which helped me and my classmates identify difficulties and refine our public speaking techniques.</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What was the most difficult part of this assignment? Explain.</li> </ul>	<p><i>The most difficult part of the assignment was the comprehension of the overall content of my presentation - seeing it not just as a document, but as a dynamic experience of a valuable learning process.</i></p> <p><i>Transforming the material into an informative, persuasive, and entertaining final presentation was an arduous task.</i></p> <p><i>It was challenging to communicate the message of our presentation in a succinct and clear way (as some may be highly skilled in their area of expertise, but still be lousy speakers).</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Analyze your performance during the presentation (the strongest and weakest points).</li> </ul>	<p><i>Strongest points:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>my introduction and my outline of the presentation provided sufficient background knowledge</i></li> <li>• <i>the content of my presentation was developed orally, in a logical order</i></li> <li>• <i>given the time constraints, the topic was developed sufficiently</i></li> <li>• <i>I had scientifically valid arguments</i></li> <li>• <i>the global conclusion of my presentation emphasized the significance of the previously presented information</i></li> <li>• <i>I was enthusiastic about the topic, well-organized and prepared</i></li> <li>• <i>I considered competing theories and dealt with them properly</i></li> <li>• <i>I made effective use of visual materials</i></li> <li>• <i>I was absorbed by the task and quick to react to the audience's needs</i></li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>I actively looked for the answers of the audience</i></li> <li>• <i>I explained key terms</i></li> </ul> <p><i>Weakest points:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>I could have been more responsive to the audience's needs, expanding on their answers</i></li> <li>• <i>I was a bit anxious about my performance in front of an audience</i></li> <li>• <i>I mispronounced some lexical items</i></li> <li>• <i>I mentioned the wrong framework to indicate the emergence of a school of thought in SLA</i></li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Propose 2 marks for your own performance, one for the research stage and the other one for the presentation. Argue</li> </ul>	<p><i>Marks:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>for the research stage: 10</i></li> <li>• <i>for the presentation: 9</i></li> </ul>

**PEER-ASSESSMENT** (This table assesses the other projects.)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Did you benefit in any way from this particular presentation? Consider the prospective impact on your own knowledge of the topic. Comment.</li> </ul>	<p><i>I have consolidated my understanding of different theories of language acquisition and I focused on the cognitive processes which help learners internalize a foreign language.</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strongest &amp; weakest points of the presentation. Comment.</li> </ul>	<p><i>Strongest points of the presentation:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>The main ideas of his presentation were presented in an orderly and clear fashion;</i></li> <li>• <i>He tackled both the theoretical positions of the chapter and their empirical evidence;</i></li> <li>• <i>The presenter maintained eye contact with the audience and used body language appropriately;</i></li> <li>• <i>The material included was relevant to the overall content of the chapter and confidently introduced to the audience;</i></li> <li>• <i>His style was fairly concise;</i></li> <li>• <i>He managed to react to failure realistically;</i></li> <li>• <i>The language performance of the presenter showed advanced proficiency in English grammar;</i></li> <li>• <i>His presentation displayed consistent attempts to illustrate the key issues of the topic.</i></li> </ul> <p><i>Weakest points of the presentation:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>The presenter did not manage to provide the</i></li> </ul>

	<p>audience with a 'take-home' message;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The visual component did not support the main points of his talk;</li> <li>• Some technical terms and concepts (such as positive and negative reinforcement and classical conditioning) were not well-defined and appropriately passed on to the audience;</li> <li>• some PPT slides could have been glued together to avoid all the inessential details and the chaotic outline of the subject matter (e.g., the information related to Behaviorism and ALM incorporated one sentence on a slide and a few others on the following slides);</li> <li>• Although the presenter demonstrated some syntactic variety and range of vocabulary, an accumulation of errors was noticeable (e.g., 'Teaching is directed to provide SS with native like models');</li> <li>• Some words were mispronounced (like rote)</li> <li>• The presentation was seriously flawed by the inadequate organization of the examples provided and by the insufficient details to support generalizations;</li> <li>• Upper case and lowercase letters were unsystematically used to label titles and headings (in a mixed-case fashion);</li> <li>• Limited audience interaction - the presenter did not try to increase audience participation or to connect with the other classmates on a personal level and have them engaged in what he was sharing with them (one of the crucial mistakes you can make during a presentation - getting wrapped up in delivering the presentation that you forget about the needs of your audience).</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Marks proposed for presentations (consider organization of presentation, interaction with the audience, command of English, time management etc.). Argue.</li> </ul>	<p>Overall, I would rate this presentation as good (8).</p>

**Appendix C. End-of-term overall assessment**

**Over the semester, you watched and assessed a number of presentations**

**(including your own) and participated in several follow-up discussions. In your view, which are the major achievements at the end of the course? You also participated in peer- and self-assessment activities. Has your attitude towards assessment changed in any way? Explain in about 500 words.**

*The self-assessment process made me reshape my understanding of self-scoring and evaluation in general. A teacher's first job is to make students aware of the dangers of relying solely on their teacher for the evaluation of their production skills. Thus, the main advantage of my self-assessment was my increased capacity of assuming responsibility for my own learning and autonomy. Evaluating one's own experience may be of great help in acquiring the skills and habits of reflecting on others' performances. I could incorporate reflective learning into the overall process of my progress. It also served as a means of developing high-order thinking skills (critical and creative thinking). Just as language teaching methods undergo periodic waves of renewal, so does (alternative) assessment. Reflective teaching needs to integrate a reversal of the "politically correct" and conventional assessment. A closer look at the acquisition process may help students monitor their performance. Learners may even adjust their techniques and revise their learning process in general. Extending the evaluation process beyond the limitation of traditional practices can be used to build up a comprehensive picture of what students can do in a language. Learners (including myself) develop intrinsic motivation and a self-propelled wish to enhance their current abilities.*

*Peer -assessment, on the other hand, appeals to one of the principles provided by Douglas Brown - collaborative learning. I (and I am sure the other classmates felt the same) could benefit from the collective wisdom of a community of learners with common purposes and teaching objectives. Our views may be subjectively flawed when we perform and we might not be able to discern our own errors. We may be either too harsh on ourselves or too self-flattering and peer-assessment could be both noteworthy and fruitful for the next time we get involved into the process of completing a certain task. The feedback we received and the comments we shared were useful not only for assessing our performances at that moment, but also for the setting of future goals. Maintaining an eye on our teaching pursuits has the advantage of fostering intrinsic motivation (and extrinsic motivation in the case of peer-assessment). The several follow-up in-class discussions and the actual peer- and self-assessment activities bridged the gap between strategic planning and self-monitoring the tasks we were acquainted with during the whole semester.*

*Self-assessment and peer-assessment gave me the opportunity of thinking about the extent to which I have reached a desirable competency level or my "sometimes" and "not yet" abilities. I got to gauge and lower my own anxiety related to evaluation and grades. It made me capitalize on my preferences and compensate for my inexperienced views on teaching. By trying to be honest and come up with objective opinions, I tried to minimize the beneficial wash back effect of both self- and peer-assessment. Rethinking the nature of learning and viewing teachers as co-learners may influence educational change, after all. Traditional assessment may become out of fashion at some time in the future. In the meantime,*

*we can focus on learner-based innovations (like self-and peer-assessment) with a reformist zeal.*

**Appendix D. Theories and Approaches to TEFL – Timetable**

Date		Topics	Readings	Assignments
<b>Week 1</b> Lecture 1	Oct 6 <sup>th</sup>	Administrative issues; Introduction to language teaching methods		
<b>Week 2</b> Lecture 2	Oct 13 <sup>th</sup> Team 1&2	The Grammar- Translation Method & The Direct Method	(Larsen- Freeman, 2000), Ch. 2&3	Micro-teaching activity assessment required to sit the exam)
<b>Week 3</b> Lecture 3	Oct 20 <sup>th</sup> Team 3&4	The Audio-Lingual Method & The Silent Way	(Larsen- Freeman, 2000), Ch. 4&5	Micro-teaching activity assessment required to sit the exam)
<b>Week 4</b> Lecture 4	Oct 27 <sup>th</sup> Team 5&6	Desuggestopedia & Community Language Learning	(Larsen- Freeman, 2000), Ch. 6&7	Micro-teaching activity assessment required to sit the exam)
<b>Week 5</b> Reading week	Nov 3 <sup>rd</sup> Team 7&8	Total Physical Response & Communicative Language Teaching	(Larsen- Freeman, 2000), Ch. 8&9	Micro-teaching activity assessment required to sit the exam)
<b>Week 6</b> Lecture 5	Nov 10 <sup>th</sup> Team 9	The Task-Based Approach Exam Revision	(Larsen- Freeman, 2000), Ch.10	Micro-teaching activity assessment required to sit the exam)
<b>Term paper</b>	Nov 17 <sup>th</sup>			

**Time:** Fridays, 16.00-20.00

**Course readings:** Larsen-Freeman, D. (2000). *Techniques and Principles in Language Teaching*. New York: Oxford University Press.