

1 **Title:** Effects of the traditional and flipped classrooms on undergraduate student opinions and
2 success

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11
12 **Abstract:** The flipped classroom is becoming increasingly popular at universities due to its
13 perceived benefits in promoting active learning and decreasing educational costs. Studies have
14 found positive benefits associated with flipped classrooms; however, many have failed to control
15 for confounding factors; examples of confounding factors include studies that compare courses
16 taught by different instructors and/or across courses taught in different semesters using different
17 quizzes). The objective of this paper is to compare the traditional and flipped classrooms in an
18 undergraduate civil engineering course while controlling for potential confounding factors. The
19 quasi-experimental study incorporates students' online behaviors, in-class performance, office
20 hour attendance, and their responses to both attitudinal and behavioral questions to assess student
21 opinions and learning outcomes. It was found that student performance on quizzes was not
22 significantly different across the traditional and flipped classrooms. A key shortcoming noted with
23 the flipped classroom was students' inability to ask questions during lectures. Students in flipped
24 classrooms were more likely to attend office hours compared to traditional classroom students, but
25 the difference was not statistically significant. Future research should explore whether students'
26 inability to ask questions when the material is presented in flipped classrooms impacts learning
27 outcomes.

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29 **Author keywords:** traditional classroom, flipped classroom, online behavior, classroom
30 attitudes

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Introduction

49 For more than a decade, the educational system in the United States has been evolving and
50 educators have been calling for the creation of new, innovative classroom techniques (e.g., see
51 (Prensky 2010, Wilson 2004). The arrival of millennials into higher education, a generation unlike
52 any of its predecessors, has left educators searching for tools on how to reach it (Prensky 2010,
53 Wilson 2004). This unique generation, which has been labeled as “technologically savvy,” will
54 “expect faculty to incorporate technology into their teaching and to be proficient in using it”
55 (Wilson 2004). Some argue that millennials’ technological savviness has led to an inability to
56 focus in the classroom whereas others believe “it is not our students’ attention capabilities that
57 have changed, but rather their tolerance and needs” (Prensky 2010). Regardless of the underlying
58 changes in classroom attentiveness, educators need to rethink their approach on how to capture
59 and keep the attention of their students.

60 One approach, the flipped classroom, also referred to as the inverted classroom (Strayer
61 2012; Mason et al. 2013), was introduced to promote the use of technology as well as active and
62 collaborative learning in the classroom. In contrast to the traditional classroom (i.e., a method that
63 includes an in-class lecture and out-of-class problem solving), the flipped classroom has students
64 watch pre-recorded lecture videos before coming to class and then “class becomes the place to
65 work through problems, advance concepts, and engage in collaborative learning” (Tucker 2012).
66 The flipped classroom also switches the instructor’s availability to students. Instead of being
67 present during the lecture, the instructor walks around the classroom to answer questions during
68 the practice problem sessions. It is argued that in the traditional classroom “the instructor’s
69 availability is at its maximum in class, but this is when the cognitive tasks for students are at their

70 lowest level and when students need the least help. It would almost seem that a reversal of the
71 traditional setup would be an improvement: Have students acquire basic information through
72 lectures, reading, and other sources outside of class, and put them to work on challenging, high-
73 level cognitive tasks during class” (Talbert 2012).

74 The flipped classroom has become increasingly popular as the membership for the Flipped
75 Learning Network more than tripled in one year alone, increasing from 2,500 teachers in 2011 to
76 9,000 in 2012 (Goodwin and Miller 2013). This increase is expected to continue at the university
77 level. Specifically, higher education has seen a large fluctuation in enrollment, which is mainly
78 attributed to the recent economic recession (Roach 2014). This has led to increased educational
79 costs, prompting President Obama to announce a White House plan to make college more
80 affordable; the plan includes flipped classrooms as part of the solution. This plan states, “A rising
81 tide of innovation has the potential to shake up the higher education landscape. Promising
82 approaches include three-year accelerated degrees, Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs), and
83 ‘flipped’ or ‘hybrid’ classrooms where students watch lectures at home and online and faculty
84 challenge them to solve problems and deepen their knowledge in class. Some of these approaches
85 are still being developed, and too few students are seeing their benefits” (The White House 2013).
86 The flipped method is assumed to be more cost-effective than the traditional method. In part, this
87 is because in a flipped environment, instructors who walk through the classroom are able to engage
88 one-on-one with students. Thus, “more students can be added to the classroom without sacrificing
89 the ‘student to valuable-human-time’ that is traditionally only gained with low student to teacher
90 ratios” (Roach 2014). Although the flipped classroom allows a high degree of interaction with
91 students, the benefits of this interaction likely decrease as the classroom size increases; however,

92 we are not aware of any studies that examine how the potential benefits of flipped classrooms
93 diminish with increasing class sizes.

94 Although the flipped classroom appears promising in its ability to match the millennials’
95 learning style and decrease educational costs, it is important to assess whether flipped methods are
96 indeed better than traditional methods. Do flipped classrooms improve learning outcomes? Do
97 students in flipped classrooms master course concepts better? Do students like flipped classrooms?
98 Numerous studies have examined these and related questions at the high school and university
99 levels. However, the delivery of flipped classrooms at the high school and university levels differs.
100 It is typically easier to hold students accountable in high school settings; for example, high school
101 teacher Jonathan Bergmann checks that each student took notes on the online lecture (Tucker
102 2012). This practice would not generally be feasible at the university level due to time constraints
103 and could be negatively received by students. Similarly, high school students that finish the
104 practice problems early are expected to start watching the next night’s assigned video while in
105 class (Fulton 2012). Most likely college students would leave class early instead, an option not
106 available to high school students. Due to these differences, the remainder of this paper will focus
107 solely on university-level studies, as they are most applicable to the research presented.

108 Several studies have found that students enjoy and are successful in the flipped classroom.
109 In a study at Texas Tech University, a single semester of a microeconomics course was flipped.
110 Not only did 76% of responding students indicate that the “flipped learning helped them learn,”
111 but also that the “students performed slightly better on average on midterm tests compared to
112 previous semesters taught by the same instructor even though the tests were more difficult by the
113 standards set forth by the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB)”
114 (Roach 2014). Flipping a class at Villanova University’s College of Engineering found that “the

115 bottom third of students' grades were more than 10 percent higher than in a traditional classroom
116 (the difference between a D+ and a C) and more than 3 percent higher for the class as a whole
117 (moving from a C+ to a B-)” (Bidwell 2014). Similarly, a study at Seattle University found, “1)
118 the inverted classroom allowed the instructor to cover more material; 2) students participating in
119 the inverted classroom performed as well or better on comparable quiz questions and on open-
120 ended design problems; and, 3) while students initially struggled with the new format, they adapted
121 quickly and found the inverted classroom format to be satisfactory and effective” (Mason et al.
122 2013). It is important to note that these findings could be due to differences in learning
123 environments across these universities, e.g., the learning experience in a microeconomics course
124 at Texas Tech, an engineering course at Villanova, and courses at Seattle University vs. Harvey
125 Mudd are likely very different due to the types of students enrolled at these universities, typical
126 class sizes, and other factors. These findings could also be due to different student levels, e.g., an
127 introductory micro-economics course may be targeted to freshman whereas an introductory
128 engineering course may be targeted to sophomores.

129 Although there are positive studies surrounding the flipped classroom issue, there are many
130 studies that remain skeptical of this new classroom method. Sam Buemi, an instructor at
131 Northcentral Technical College, reflects on his flipped classroom experiences stating,
132 “...technology in the classroom is not a solution to age-old educational problems. Some students
133 still come to class ill-prepared or unmotivated. Requiring work to be completed outside of class
134 may not solve that problem” (Buemi 2014). Similarly, preliminary results in the first year of a
135 three-year study found that “following the first year of implementation, the inverted classroom
136 model at Harvey Mudd College showed equivalent results in comparison to the traditional
137 classroom model in terms of student performance” (Lape et al. 2014). Urbaczewski’s study of a

138 summer university-level course found that “overall, students were not pleased with [the flipped]
139 format. Several students complained bitterly about the amount of work in the course, the frequency
140 and difficulty of the quizzes, and some of the course policies. While many complained about not
141 ‘learning’ anything in the basic spreadsheet course, they then also complained about having to
142 ‘learn on their own’ or being behind because they did not really learn anything in the basic class”
143 (Urbaczewski 2013).

144 The conflicting results reported in the literature may be due, in part, to confounding factors
145 that are introduced through the study designs. The presence of two factors that change between
146 study group A and study group B (e.g., traditional vs. flipped sections) makes it impossible to
147 statistically attribute the impact of a result to the first (or second) factor. For example, one of the
148 most common study designs compares traditional and flipped sections of a course that occur across
149 different semesters. This means that student performance in each classroom is measured using
150 different quizzes (Roach 2014; Mason et al. 2013). The difference in performance could be
151 attributed to one quiz being harder than the other and not necessarily one classroom method being
152 superior. Sometimes the sections are taught simultaneously, but with two different professors,
153 leading to an instructor bias (Webster and Majerich 2014). The difference in performance could
154 be attributed to one instructor being better than the other instructor. Another common form of bias
155 in the literature is not having a traditional “control” group, which is very common as “most studies
156 conducted [before June 2012] explored student perceptions and use single-group study designs”
157 (Bishop and Verleger 2013). This study design can lead to incorrect conclusions specifically with
158 student opinion surveys. For example, a majority of students can indicate that the flipped
159 classroom helps them learn. However, if a concurrent traditional section had been held, it is
160 possible that the majority of those students could have responded similarly regarding the traditional

161 method. It can also be hard to recognize the presence of selection bias in previous studies as the
162 recruitment process is not well described. For example, there is the possibility of selection bias in
163 flipped classroom studies if students are given the chance to drop the course after being notified
164 the teaching style of their section.

165 The purpose of this Institutional Review Board (IRB) approved study is to compare student
166 performance and opinions in the flipped and traditional classrooms while using advanced data
167 collection techniques and avoiding many sources of bias that have been present in earlier studies.
168 Specific research questions include the following: (1) Do students prefer a flipped or traditional
169 classroom format? (2) Do students perform better in flipped or traditional formats? (3) Do students
170 in flipped classrooms spend more or less time mastering material than students in traditional
171 classrooms? (4) What do students perceive as benefits and disadvantages of flipped classrooms?
172 This study uses information from student records, course grades, surveys, and online tracking
173 systems to capture a wide range aspects of the classroom that could be impacted by the method
174 used. Due to its careful design, this study is expected to meaningfully contribute to the comparison
175 of the traditional and flipped classrooms at the university level.

176 **Methodology**

177 *Design*

178 Two sections of a required undergraduate course, civil engineering systems, were taught by the
179 same instructor during the spring 2014 semester. This course is composed of three modules; the
180 first module is qualitative and covers sustainability concepts whereas the last two modules are
181 quantitative and cover engineering economy. One section used a traditional classroom approach
182 to teach the two quantitative modules whereas the second section used a flipped classroom
183 approach. In the traditional classroom format, all of the class time was spent lecturing to students,

184 with no active learning activities. All other factors between the two sections were identical, i.e.,
185 both sections had the same instructor, teaching assistant, graders, example problems, homework
186 assignments, quizzes, due dates, and office hours. To control for possible time-of-day bias (e.g.,
187 differences in students who prefer morning versus afternoon courses), the two sections were taught
188 back-to-back in the afternoon with a ten minute break in between the sections. The scheduling of
189 the two sections also helped prevent students in the earlier section from sharing quiz information
190 with students in the later section.

191 Students could register for – and switch between – course sections until the end of the first
192 week of class. To ensure students did not self-select into the traditional or flipped section, students
193 were not informed of the study nor told whether they were in the traditional or flipped section until
194 after the registration period. Students from two majors typically register for the course: civil and
195 environmental engineering (CEE) and industrial and systems engineering (ISyE). Students' prior
196 exposure to engineering economics and the number of years they have spent in college differ by
197 major. CEE majors typically take the course in their sophomore year and have had little to no
198 prior exposure to engineering economics. In contrast, due to limited enrollment space during the
199 during the spring semester, only ISyE majors who are in their last semester and need the course to
200 fulfill graduation requirements are allowed to register. All ISyE students who registered in the
201 civil engineering systems course during the spring 2014 semester had prior exposure to
202 engineering economics as all ISyE students are required to take a course in engineering economics
203 offered by their department. The amount of overlap between the engineering economics modules
204 offered in the CEE and ISyE courses is approximately 50 percent. Given these differences, and
205 the fact that more ISyE students registered for the flipped section, all ISyE students were excluded
206 from the study for the spring 2014 semester.

207 ***Data Collection***

208 This study incorporated information from online clickstream data, student records, grades obtained
209 in the civil engineering systems course, teaching assistant and instructor observations, and surveys.
210 Table 1 defines the variables used in the study and the source of each variable. Given the variables
211 are self-explanatory, this section describes relevant details of the data collection process.

212 The course used two websites. The first website is the primary website that the Georgia
213 Institute of Technology uses for its courses; however, it was not possible to post videos and track
214 behavior from this website, thus a second website was used for this purpose. Clickstream data was
215 collected from both websites. Students accessed the majority of course materials from the main
216 course site, e.g., the syllabus, old practice quizzes, homework assignments, answer keys, and
217 lecture slides. Whenever a link was clicked on the main course website, the clickstream data would
218 note the student's name and computer's IP address, the link the student clicked on, and when the
219 student clicked on the link. A second website was used to host the video lectures. On the video
220 website, the clickstream data would note how many times a student clicked to watch a video. Since
221 each of the websites required students to sign in using their student identification numbers, each
222 action could be linked to the individual student.

223 Information about how far in advance students downloaded course material was also
224 collected. Due to technological limitations, it was not possible to collect information about the
225 total duration that a student watched a video and how far in advance it was watched for Study 1.
226 The average number of days before starting the homework was determined using the course's
227 clickstream data. The average number of days before a homework was due was calculated from
228 the three homework assignments given during the study, each posted about two weeks before its
229 due date. If the student never opened the homework or viewed it for the first time after the due

230 date, this variable was set to zero. For example, if a student viewed the Homework 1 assignment
231 for the first time 6 days before it was due, Homework 2 assignment 1 day after it was due, and
232 never opened the Homework 3 assignment, then their “Average Number of Days Before
233 Homework Due” would be 2 (the average of 6, 0, and 0). Days before the Homework 2 assignment
234 would be recoded to zero because it was negative. The same logic was used to compute how many
235 days before the quiz the student looked at the old practice quizzes provided on the course website.
236 These old quizzes were posted at the beginning of the semester.

237 In addition to the clickstream information, background information on each student was
238 obtained from the Institute’s records. This includes the student’s age, gender, major as of
239 December 2013, number of course credits earned at the Georgia Institute of Technology, and the
240 student’s overall GPA associated with courses taken at the Institute.

241 Student performance was measured via quiz grades. Each section had two quiz scores that
242 were averaged. That is, in the traditional section, the quiz scores from the second and third modules
243 were averaged to provide an indication of student performance in the traditional classroom setting.
244 The same was done in the flipped section.

245 Student behavior outside of class was also noted. Office hours were held the day before
246 each homework assignment was due and the day before each quiz. The teaching assistant kept
247 records of which students attended each office hour session.

248 Finally, students completed three surveys throughout the semester, each designed with
249 insights based on several online blogs and articles from teachers that had been using flipped
250 classrooms (Kirch, unpublished blog, 2014; Camel, unpublished blog; Roshan 2012a; and Roshan
251 2012b). Insights from these online resources stressed the importance of asking students about their
252 behavior outside of class that the online tracking could not capture (e.g. what they do while

253 watching the videos, whether they rewind or fast-forward the videos, the reasons they do not watch
254 the videos, etc). The first survey collected background information and assessed students'
255 familiarity with flipped classroom and online courses. All three surveys collected information
256 about students' opinions and preferences regarding the different instruction methods. By having
257 students complete the surveys at the beginning of the semester, after the first technical module,
258 and after the second technical module, it was possible to assess how opinions and preferences
259 changed in the flipped section relative to the traditional classroom control group. Limited
260 information was collected from the traditional section in the last survey as they could not answer
261 questions about their flipped experience in this course. That is, their opinion on the traditional
262 method would likely not change throughout the study as they had not experienced the flipped
263 method. However, the time commitment between the two modules could change, so they were
264 asked to indicate the time commitment of the class again in the third survey.

265 [Insert Table 1 about here]

266 ***Data Analysis***

267 An analysis database was compiled from the sources described in the previous section. STATA,
268 a statistical software program, was used to analyze the data. The statistical analysis of data
269 included descriptive statistics (e.g., means, standard deviations, and frequencies), correlations,
270 pairwise t-tests, and Chi-square tests.

271

272 ***Subjects***

273 Participation in the study was voluntary and had no impact on grades. The instructor and graders
274 had no knowledge of which students were participating in the study until after course grades were
275 submitted. Table 2 provides descriptive statistics for students who participated in the summary

276 and compares these statistics to the total class enrollment. This comparison allows us to determine
277 if there was a selection bias, i.e., if the population of students who participated in the study differs
278 from the population of students who enrolled in the course. Overall, those students who
279 participated in the study are similar to the general population of students who registered for the
280 course. Those who participated are slightly more likely to be female and slightly more likely to
281 have higher overall GPAs; however, these differences were not statistically significant when using
282 Welch's one-sided t-test, which is used to compare samples that possibly have unequal variances
283 (excluding ISyE students, non-participants – participants <0, p=0.3514).

284 Students in the traditional and flipped sections are also similar. A comparison of the
285 students' overall GPAs on their transcripts shows that the traditional class had a 3.09 average and
286 the flipped was a 3.24 average. In both classes, the study participants had a higher average GPA
287 than the total class enrollment. The difference in GPAs between the two study groups was 0.07.
288 Both study samples were about 60% male, 40% female.

289 Students were surveyed for additional background information that their transcripts could
290 not provide. The number of respondents per question is in parentheses. For example, of the 36
291 study participants in the traditional section, 35 of them answered the question on internet access.
292 Of the 35 students who responded to this question, 97.1% had internet access at home. It was
293 found that a very high percent of each study group had internet access at home, which meant they
294 had a location in addition to the university's campus where they could access course materials and
295 online lecture videos. Although the majority of students in each section had previously heard
296 about a flipped classroom, at most a third had actually experienced a flipped classroom. Students
297 were also asked about their experiences with online courses since, like flipped courses, they rely

298 heavily on the internet and have a more flexible schedule. Similar to prior flipped classroom
299 experience, at most a third of each section had taken an online course in the past.

300 [Insert Table 2 about here]

301 **Results**

302 The graded course materials during the study were the homework assignments and quizzes. Since
303 students were encouraged to work together on the homework assignments, the quizzes were used
304 as the main indicator of individual student success. Specifically, two quizzes were given during
305 the study period, each given at the end of a module. Table 3 provides descriptive statistics
306 associated with the average of these two scores for each learning method. For example, the average
307 overall score on the two quizzes in the traditional section's study sample was a 75.1%.

308 The average test score for the traditional section was slightly higher than the flipped.
309 However, this difference was not significant at the 0.05 level when using Welch's t-test. This
310 insignificant difference when comparing the outcomes of the traditional and flipped classrooms
311 agrees with the preliminary findings of a three-year study by Lape, et al. (2014). The test scores
312 based on gender are directionally interesting in that, on average, females performed better than
313 males in the flipped classroom, whereas the opposite is true in the traditional classroom. It is a
314 coincidence that these two groups switch the exact same average grades of 76.1% and 73.9%
315 between the two classes. However, these differences were not significant when using a one-sided
316 Welch's t-test (female-male<0, p=0.2376 for traditional format and female-male>0, p=0.2942 for
317 flipped format). On average, students who preferred to work alone scored slightly higher in the
318 flipped format than those who preferred to work in groups, whereas the opposite is true for the
319 traditional format. There are multiple explanations that could explain this result. First, the lecture
320 time is moved outside of class, which promotes individual learning. Conversely, it can be
321 beneficial for those working alone to be forced to collaborate during class. Regardless of the

322 reason, the difference in test scores between those who preferred to work alone versus in groups
323 was not significant when using a one-sided t-test (group-alone>0, p=0.2418 in the traditional
324 section and group-alone<0, p=0.4586 in the flipped section).

325 [Insert Table 3 about here]

326 Tables 4 and 5 present the correlations and their corresponding p-values among study
327 variables for the traditional and flipped sections, respectively. Correlations reveal patterns for the
328 class as a whole. The student's transcript GPA was a better predictor than earned credit hours of
329 quiz performance (and positively correlated) in the traditional section. Both of these variables
330 were also good predictors of quiz performance in the flipped section; in fact, the student's
331 transcript GPA was more highly correlated in the flipped section than in the traditional section. A
332 student's overall GPA may be more indicative of the student's ability to perform well in a variety
333 of subjects and situations. To the extent that the flipped classroom represents an unfamiliar
334 learning environment (and one with an adjustment period), students with higher overall GPAs
335 would be expected to perform better than students with lower overall GPAs. Therefore, this means
336 that students' grades would remain relative to one another (i.e., high GPA means more likely to
337 get a higher grade in the course and vice versa), not necessarily that the flipped helps one group
338 more than the other.

339 Student behavior in the class itself was found to be correlated with success. The average
340 number of days in advance of a due date that students downloaded a homework assignment was
341 positively correlated with success on quizzes in the traditional section. The average number of
342 days in advance of a quiz that students downloaded old quizzes was also positively correlated with
343 success on quizzes in the traditional section. Interestingly, these relationships did not appear in
344 the flipped classroom. That is, it was not as important to prepare in advance to achieve success in

345 the flipped classroom as compared with the traditional classroom. One explanation is that access
346 to online lectures and the ability to watch and rewatch videos provides students with the resources
347 they need to complete homeworks or study for quizzes; examples of old quizzes become less
348 important for success. An alternate explanation is that the assurance of last-minute resource
349 availability is promoting procrastination, which does not appear to be significantly impeding
350 success as the grades between the two sections are not significantly different.

351 Student behavior was also measured via the number of materials students viewed on the
352 course website (e.g., syllabus, lecture notes, practice quizzes, etc.). The more materials students
353 viewed, the more likely they were to be successful on the quizzes. Two variables were used to
354 quantify student presence on the website. As defined in Table 1, the “total number of non-video
355 views” counts how many times students viewed the materials. However, it was possible for
356 students to print out the resources, which could make the “total number of non-video materials
357 viewed” at least once just as important as the number of resource views. For each class, both the
358 total number of non-video views and total number of non-video materials viewed were positively
359 correlated with quiz performance. The correlation between quiz grade and the total number of
360 materials viewed at least once on the course website was stronger for the flipped classroom (0.3198
361 versus 0.1073). This makes sense, as the flipped classroom is designed to be more dependent on
362 online resources. However, total times “videos viewed,” i.e., the total number of videos a student
363 opened up at least once, was not correlated with success on the quizzes. This could be due to not
364 being able to track how long students watched the videos (e.g., the data did not distinguish between
365 view times of two seconds versus 15 minutes). Also, it was not known how attentive the students
366 were when watching each of the videos. The absence of correlation between videos viewed and
367 student success is further supported by Table 8. This table shows for example the material on Quiz

368 3 was contained in four videos. Three of the students did not watch any of the four videos and on
369 average made an 81.67% on the quiz.

370 Some subtle differences in student behavior between the traditional and flipped sections
371 were related to the number of office hour sessions students attended that merits discussion. The
372 more office hour sessions that the students attended, the more likely they were to do well on
373 quizzes. This is true of both sections. Although the attendance of office hours shown in Table 7
374 is not significantly different between the two sections using Chi-Square tests, increased attendance
375 from the flipped section is noticeable. The increase in attendance from the flipped section was
376 somewhat surprising, given that the flipped classroom allows students, the instructor and/or other
377 teaching assistants to interact directly with groups of students as they work problems. However,
378 the questions students are asking the instructor and/or teaching assistants during class are focused
379 more on the problems they are being asked to work through. Very few students asked questions
380 about general concepts during the flipped class (nor in office hours). The higher attendance in
381 office hour sessions by students in the flipped classroom, as shown by Table 7, could potentially
382 be attributed to students not mastering fundamental concepts when watching the online videos,
383 thereby experiencing more difficulty in applying concepts to homework problems. There are
384 opportunities in several classes for students to use “cookbook” problem solving techniques, but
385 miss important overall concepts. For example, in queueing theory, students may be able to
386 calculate the number of cars in the queue and service time for both determinant and stochastic
387 models, but fail to understand why these numbers are different for each model. Also, in fluid
388 mechanics, students can solve for drag using the coefficient of drag. However, students who
389 simply look up the number in a table would miss the overall dynamics of how drag works (e.g.,
390 the presence of the boundary layer) and how this coefficient is derived.

414 One student even clicked on the video eight times. Again, it is unlikely this student watched the
415 video in completion each time, but rather may have opened it up accidentally and quickly closed
416 the video. Although the majority of students watched each video, it is important to note that
417 viewership decreased as the semester proceeded.

418 [Insert Table 8 about here]

419 *Survey Results*

420 Throughout the semester, both sections were surveyed about their opinions on the classroom
421 method used. The surveys allowed us to compare the opinions between the two sections and to
422 assess how students' opinions evolved as the class progressed. Students in the traditional
423 classroom were only asked about the traditional method, as the majority of them had never
424 experienced a flipped classroom and therefore could not answer questions about it. The flipped
425 students were asked to compare their experiences in the flipped classroom with that in traditional
426 classrooms. Table 9 shows the survey results.

427 The traditional section was treated as the control group and was asked only during the
428 second survey how they felt about the traditional classroom. On average, the students had a
429 positive experience in the traditional section, with 33.3% of respondents indicating they loved it
430 and 63.0% liking it most of the time. Many students noted that they felt most comfortable in the
431 traditional classroom setting since they had so much experience with it in the past. For example,
432 one student said, "Traditional is what I am used to, so I like it now just as always." Another student
433 believed that the traditional method had a higher educational value by suggesting, "I love
434 traditional classes. I pay tuition to be taught by a teacher, not teach myself." A few students
435 expressed concern that the traditional format did not always agree with their learning speed,
436 causing them to "feel rushed" or the "need a chance to catch up." Halfway through the class,

437 students were asked how much more time they spent per week on this class compared to similar
438 classes with the same credit hours. The results showed that 0% said much more than average,
439 32.2% said somewhat more than average, 35.7% said average, 25.0% said somewhat less than
440 average, and 7.1% said much less than average. The same question was asked at the end of the
441 semester and received a very similar response distribution. Therefore when this class was taught
442 in the traditional style, the time commitment was on par with other the other courses the students
443 had taken.

444 Before starting the flipped classroom, the survey administrator described what a flipped
445 classroom was and then a survey asked them to give their initial opinion based on the description.
446 The surveys provided students' opinions on the flipped method before they experienced it. In
447 response, 23.8% would rather have the instructor lecture during the class (reasons cited included
448 the ability to ask questions to the instructor at the time the material was presented and the
449 perception that in-class lectures were more interesting and helped students retain information
450 better). Conversely, 33.3% indicated they would rather watch the videos (reasons cited included
451 the ability to learn at their own pace, supervised problem-solving sessions, and shorter in-class
452 lecture times). A total of 38.1% were indifferent (could not give a good answer without
453 experiencing the flipped method first, liked the videos but also want to ask questions during
454 lecture), and 4.8% stated they had an opinion other than the options given (e.g., like the idea of
455 videos but question motivation to watch them without a scheduled lecture time).

456 Midway through the semester, the flipped section was surveyed again for their opinions
457 now that they had experienced the flipped classroom. Overall the students had a positive
458 experience with the flipped classroom, where 26.3% loved it and 68.4% liked it. Very similar
459 results were given to the same question at the end of the semester, although the final opinion

460 distribution was somewhat less favorable than that of the traditional classroom students, with fewer
461 flipped than traditional students loving their format (29.4% versus 33.3%) and more hating it (5.9%
462 versus 3.7%). The less favorable opinions may be confounded with the fact that the survey was
463 administered late in the semester and at a time when many courses have final projects due; that is,
464 there could be more out-of-class activities competing for students' time later in the semester,
465 making it more difficult for students to find time to watch videos outside of class.

466 When comparing their flipped learning to that of traditional learning, midway through the
467 semester 21.1% said flipped helped them learn much better than traditional, 57.9% better than
468 traditional, 21.0% the same as traditional, 0% less than traditional. By the end of the semester,
469 their opinions shifted to being more critical of the flipped than when compared to the traditional.
470 Positive feedback regarding the flipped classroom included the following statements: (1) "I feel
471 like I am learning in class instead of pretending to listen;" (2) the flipped classroom provided "great
472 practice and a good opportunity to ask questions;" and, (3) "I like it because it is a more efficient
473 learning process, but it takes some time to get used to the new method of learning." Conversely,
474 negative responses included: (1) a student perceiving inconsistencies in the video material versus
475 practice problem material; (2) a few students forgetting to watch the videos before class; and, (3)
476 one student stating "I'd rather be in class so I pay attention." It is important to note that the flipped
477 student survey responses did not indicate problems with the pacing of the class (e.g., too fast or
478 too slow). Students in the flipped section felt the time commitment was basically the same as their
479 other classes with the same credit hours. Midway through the semester, the flipped student
480 opinions included 5.3% saying the time commitment was much more than average, 10.5%
481 somewhat more than average, 52.6% average, 21.1% somewhat less than average, and 10.5%
482 much less than average. At the end of the semester, this changed to 0%, 35.3%, 35.3%, 23.5%,

504 **Study Limitations**

505 Although this study was able to record students' actual online actions, it was difficult to find clear
506 relationships between online actions and student success. Intuitively, this may be because the
507 same online action, such as how many times a student clicked on each resource, can represent
508 different behaviors. On one hand, a student with few clicks can be less engaged in the course and
509 therefore less likely to succeed. On the other hand, this same action could represent students that
510 are printing out each resource so they can take notes, therefore only needing to view each resource
511 once on the website. Printing of resources would potentially lead to a higher success rate. As a
512 second example, consider office hour attendance. Students who attend office hours can have
513 several motives for showing up, including to check their approaches after completing the
514 assignment or to get hints from others before attempting the assignment. Future studies may be
515 able to overcome this limitation by recording the length of time online activities, such as video
516 viewing, and/or identifying when students print materials.

517 Also, a number of students failed to view some or all of the online lectures and/or never
518 looked at old practice quizzes. Either the students never took advantage of these resources or they
519 could have viewed them during a joint study session where several students use a single computer
520 with one student's username. We hypothesize that this limitation can be overcome simply by
521 changing the classroom setting, specifically to an online course or MOOC where distance between
522 students would minimize the ability of students to work together in person.

523 There were design elements of these studies that could be improved. Specifically, it would
524 be best in the surveys to continue asking the traditional students about their feelings on the
525 traditional classroom instead of assuming that it stays constant throughout the semester. Lastly, if
526 flipped classrooms continue to become more popular, future flipped classroom studies will be able

527 to minimize potential reactive effects of experimental arrangements (Campbell and Stanley, 1963),
528 which may have impacted this study. That is, once flipped classrooms become more mainstream,
529 students will be less motivated to act abnormally (e.g., try harder in the class) due to being heavily
530 scrutinized in an educational study.

531 Finally, it is important to note that our study is based on a moderate class size of
532 approximately 50 students. A traditional learning environment will differ across class sizes, and
533 the results of our study may not be transferrable to large classes with hundreds of students.

534 **Conclusion**

535 One of the key findings from the study is that regardless of classroom type, good study habits are
536 essential to student success. The correlations suggest that students who were successful on the
537 quizzes generally had higher GPAs, started the homework assignments earlier, began studying for
538 the quizzes earlier, and attended office hours. None of the classrooms promoted or inhibited good
539 study habits. Simply stated, students who have been successful in the past are likely to continue
540 being successful whether in a traditional or flipped classroom.

541 Consistent with the findings of Mason and colleagues (2013), we found that students
542 initially struggled with the flipped classroom format. Survey questions related to time commitment
543 and enjoyment level received much more polarized answers from the students during the flipped
544 classroom than compared to the traditional classroom. This result suggests that students must learn
545 to adapt to this new classroom environment in the initial weeks of the course. The adaptation
546 period varies for each student, where some catch on to the new idea quickly whereas others need
547 additional time to get in the habit of watching the videos and being self-motivated. According to
548 Roehl and colleagues (2013), in a flipped classroom the "... students may require more than a
549 semester to adapt to the new method of instruction and to recognize its value." The adaptation

550 period could be problematic, as a typical college course is only a single semester and can lead to a
551 bimodal distribution in grades. This research cautions flipped classroom instructors that the
552 method can possibly increase the frustration of weaker students at the beginning of the course. On
553 the other hand, the adaptation period can also be viewed positively. Learning a new technology
554 can be seen as an element of one’s educational experience, where “one’s adaptability to new
555 technologies is crucial for graduating students to succeed in the workplace” (Roehl et. al 2013).

556 The inability to ask questions at the time new concepts are introduced appears to be a
557 critical issue in flipped classrooms. Students want to ask questions during the online video, but
558 cannot. Importantly, these students appear less likely to ever ask the instructor or teaching assistant
559 about questions they had about the lecture. Although many students asked questions during the
560 in-class practice problem sessions, the majority of these questions were focused on the in-class
561 problems, not lecture material. The focus on solving in-class problems may make it more difficult
562 for student to apply concepts to homework assignments and can greatly increase the amount of
563 time these students need to spend out-of-class to master the material, i.e., out of class time now
564 includes both watching the lecture videos and going to office hours to ask their questions. This
565 raises another important question: namely, whether the lack of interaction with the instructor at
566 the time material is first presented is impacting fundamental understanding of the course concepts.
567 By viewing lectures ahead of time, students lose the ability to ask questions at the time material is
568 presented. The lack of immediate feedback may prevent deeper understanding of the material, as
569 there is no opportunity for the instructor to dynamically address questions in different contexts.
570 Further, the problem sessions provide more opportunities for students to apply the concepts in a
571 problem context, but students may lose the benefit of struggling with the material and trying
572 different approaches on their own. For future research, we recommended that instructors track

573 concept inventories across the sections, through pre- and post- testing questions included on
574 quizzes, to detect significant differences between the classrooms in understanding core concepts,
575 not just solving problems.

576 Based on the results of our study, the next time we taught the civil engineering systems
577 course, we used a “modified flipped” format. Specifically, we shortened the in-class lectures by
578 using PowerPoints to present key concepts (versus writing the material on the board) and used the
579 extra class time to have students work problems together. We also posted the videos previously
580 used in the flipped section for students so that they could review key concepts after class (or before
581 major quizzes). Feedback from students in the modified flipped class was positive, and we plan
582 to use this classroom format moving forward for the civil engineering systems course.

583 **Acknowledgments**

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586

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682 **Table 1.** Definition of variables

Source	Variable	Description
Main Course Website	Total Number of Non-Video Views	Total number of times the student viewed all materials posted on the website (e.g., if a student viewed the first lecture slides twice and an old quiz three times, the total number of views would be five). Excludes video viewing.
	Total Number of Non-Video Materials Viewed	Total number of materials viewed at least once on the course website (e.g., if a student viewed the first lecture slides twice and an old quiz three times, the total number of materials viewed would be two). Excludes video viewing.
	Average Number of Days Before Homework Due	The number of days between the first viewing of the homework assignment and the day it was due. Three assignments were given during the study period; the average from these assignments was used in the study.
	Average Number of Days before Quiz	The number of days between the first viewing of an old quiz and the day of the quiz. Two quizzes were given during the study period; the average from these quizzes was used in the study.
Video Course Website	Total Number of Videos Viewed	The number of videos a student viewed at least once.
Student Academic Records	Male	Indicator variable equal to 1 if the student is male, 0 if the student is female.
	Age	Age of student in years as of December 31, 2013.
	Earned Credits	Number of hours earned at the Georgia Institute of Technology (excludes advanced placement and transfer credits).
	Transcript GPA	Overall grade point average on a 4.0 scale (includes only courses taken at the Georgia Institute of Technology).
Course Grades	Quiz Grade	The average grade the student made on the two quizzes. This variable is used to measure student performance associated with a particular classroom method.
	Course GPA	The grade the student received in the civil engineering systems course on a 4.0 scale.
Teaching Assistant Observations	Office Hour Sessions	The number of office hour sessions the student attended during the study period.
Surveys	Alone	Indicator variable equal to 1 if the student prefers to work alone, 0 otherwise.
	Student Background and Attitude Information	Used to capture the student's attitudes about each classroom type and to obtain additional background information, such as whether the student had access to internet at home.

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685 **Table 2.** Summary statistics of non-ISyE students in the traditional and flipped sections

	Traditional		Flipped	
	Total Class Enrollment	Study Participants	Total Class Enrollment	Study Participants
Number of students	45	36	24	23
Number of transfer students	7	6	4	4
Average transcript GPA (non-transfer students only)	3.09	3.18	3.24	3.25
% male	57.8%	55.6%	62.5%	60.9%
% female	42.2%	44.4%	37.5%	39.1%
Average course GPA	3.16	3.31	3.29	3.30
% (number who responded) with internet access at home	N/A	97.1% (35)	N/A	95.2% (21)
% (number who responded) who had previously heard of flipped classrooms	N/A	74.3% (35)	N/A	85.7% (21)
% (number who responded) who had previously taken flipped course	N/A	28.6% (35)	N/A	33.3% (21)
% (number who responded) who had previously taken online course	N/A	20.0% (35)	N/A	33.3% (21)

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687 **Table 3.** Average scores on the two quizzes

	Traditional			Flipped		
	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	N	Mean	Std. Dev.
Study Sample	36	75.1	8.9	23	74.8	10.5
Male	20	76.1	7.4	14	73.9	12.3
Female	16	73.9	10.6	9	76.1	7.3
Alone	19	74.5	9.7	12	77.6	8.0
Group	12	76.8	8.6	6	77.1	7.7

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691 **Table 4.** Correlations in traditional section

	Quiz Grade	Alone	Male	Age	Earned Credits	Transcript GPA	Office Hours	Avg Days Before Hwk	Avg Days Before Quiz	Non-Vid Views	Non-Vid Mat Viewed
Quiz Grade	1										
Alone	-0.1271 0.4955	1									
Male	0.1281 0.4564	-0.0877 0.6389	1								
Age	0.2017 0.2382	0.0308 0.8692	0.2893 0.0871	1							
Earned Credits	0.1837 0.2834	-0.1159 0.5346	-0.3461 0.0386	-0.3241 0.0538	1						
Transcript GPA	0.3301 0.0748	0.1809 0.3869	-0.1179 0.5351	-0.1333 0.4824	0.0827 0.6639	1					
Office Hours	0.0526 0.7608	-0.1419 0.4464	-0.1721 0.3154	-0.2703 0.1108	0.0077 0.9644	0.2458 0.1905	1				
Avg Days Before Hwk	0.2217 0.1939	0.1137 0.5424	-0.1572 0.3599	-0.0244 0.8876	-0.1068 0.5354	0.2129 0.2587	0.1547 0.3676	1			
Avg Days Before Quiz	0.2285 0.1801	0.1191 0.5233	-0.0122 0.9439	0.2638 0.12	-0.2791 0.0993	0.3044 0.1019	0.1467 0.3933	0.5083 0.0015	1		
Non-Vid Views	0.2012 0.2465	-0.0818 0.6674	-0.2677 0.12	0.0615 0.7255	0.0583 0.7392	-0.0697 0.7195	-0.0105 0.9522	0.4191 0.0122	0.355 0.0364	1	
Non-Vid Mat Viewed	0.1073 0.5335	0.0229 0.9026	-0.0759 0.6601	0.0627 0.7164	0.0676 0.6953	0.1552 0.413	0.049 0.7767	0.2208 0.1957	0.188 0.2721	0.7184 0	1

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693 **Table 5.** Correlations in flipped section

	Quiz Grade	Alone	Male	Age	Earned Credits	Transcript GPA	Office Hours	Avg Days Before Hwk	Avg Days Before Quiz	Non-Vid Views	Non-Vid Mat Viewed	Videos Viewed
Quiz Grade	1											
Alone	0.0262 0.9177	1										
Male	-0.1066 0.6282	0.1612 0.5229	1									
Age	-0.3071 0.1541	0.1265 0.617	0.3107 0.149	1								
Earned Credits	-0.2826 0.1914	0.2402 0.3371	0.0943 0.6686	0.0883 0.6886	1							
Transcript GPA	0.6792 0.0014	-0.1034 0.7249	0.0773 0.753	-0.2574 0.2873	-0.5484 0.0151	1						
Office Hours	0.0616 0.7803	0.0317 0.9006	0.0031 0.9888	-0.1958 0.3706	-0.2111 0.3335	0.2787 0.248	1					
Avg Days Before Hwk	0.1462 0.5057	-0.2938 0.2366	0.285 0.1875	-0.0482 0.827	-0.2772 0.2004	0.378 0.1105	-0.0882 0.6889	1				
Avg Days Before Quiz	0.0398 0.8569	-0.4642 0.0523	-0.1612 0.4625	0.2048 0.3486	-0.2622 0.2268	0.1174 0.6321	0.0081 0.9707	0.3503 0.1013	1			
Non-Vid Views	0.1145 0.6028	-0.496 0.0363	-0.3105 0.1493	-0.082 0.71	0.1354 0.538	0.0354 0.8857	0.0015 0.9946	0.1358 0.5366	0.5357 0.0084	1		
Non-Vid Mat Viewed	0.3198 0.1368	-0.0994 0.6946	-0.5115 0.0126	-0.0525 0.812	0.0035 0.9875	0.1217 0.6197	-0.0099 0.9643	-0.0133 0.9519	0.4911 0.0173	0.639 0.001	1	
Videos Viewed	-0.065 0.7682	0.057 0.821 7	0.195 0.370 3	0.214 0.326 8	-0.17 0.438	0.1412 0.5641	0.0944 0.6682	0.3356 0.1174	0.2485 0.2528	0.1031 0.6396	-0.2095 0.3374	1

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697 **Table 6.** Relationship between number of videos watched with homework and quiz grades

	Videos Viewed								Correlation
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Homework 3	(0)	88.7% (1)	(0)	58.5% (1)	(0)	94.3% (2)	86.8% (4)	86.2% (15)	0.1085
Quiz 2	(0)	74.3% (1)	(0)	68.6% (1)	(0)	81.4% (2)	80.7% (4)	75.2% (15)	0.0166
Homework 4	63.1% (3)	91.6% (20)	---	---	---	---	---	---	0.4599
Homework 5	75.0% (4)	36.7% (2)	92.0% (5)	88.3% (12)	---	---	---	---	0.3031
Quiz 3	81.7% (3)	83.3% (1)	61.7% (2)	70.0% (5)	73.3% (12)	---	---	---	-0.1785

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701 **Table 7.** Percent of study participants per section attending office hours

	Traditional	Flipped
Homework 1	11.1%	17.4%
Homework 2	16.7%	21.7%
Quiz 1	8.3%	17.4%
Homework 3	27.8%	39.1%
Quiz 2	5.6%	8.7%
Homework 4	13.9%	21.7%
Homework 5	22.2%	21.7%
Quiz 3	5.6%	4.3%

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705 **Table 8.** Number of student views per video

Flipped	Video Length (Mins)	Observations (%)	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
1A Video	7:25	21 (91%)	2.9	2.0	1	8
1B Video	8:09	21 (91%)	1.5	0.7	1	3
2A Video	8:37	23 (100%)	2.4	1.3	1	6
2B Video	10:35	22 (96%)	1.7	0.9	1	4
3 Video	19:13	21 (91%)	2.6	1.6	1	6
4A Video	4:33	20 (87%)	2.1	1.4	1	7
4B Video	3:59	16 (70%)	1.9	2.0	1	9
5 Video	12:26	20 (87%)	2.6	1.2	1	5
6 Video	9:40	18 (78%)	2.3	0.97	1	4
7 Video	8:58	15 (65%)	2.6	1.7	1	6
8 Video	9:05	15 (65%)	2.3	1.9	1	8

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Table 9. Survey results from spring semester

What are your initial thoughts about the flipped classroom?					
	Prefer instructor lecture	Prefer watching lecture videos	Indifferent	Other	
1 st Flipped (21)	23.8%	33.3%	38.1%	4.8%	
How are you feeling about the traditional/flipped classroom?					
	Love it	Like it	Dislike it	Hate it	
2 nd Traditional (27)	33.3%	63.0%	3.7%	0%	
2 nd Flipped (19)	26.3%	68.4%	5.3%	0%	
3 rd Flipped (17)	29.4%	64.7%	5.9%	0%	
How much time do you spend on this class compared to others with the same credit hours?					
	Much more than average	Somewhat more than average	Average	Somewhat less than average	Much less than average
2 nd Traditional (28)	0%	32.2%	35.7%	25.0%	7.1%
3 rd Traditional (21)	0%	33.3%	38.1%	23.8%	4.8%
2 nd Flipped (19)	5.3%	10.5%	52.6%	21.1%	10.5%
3 rd Flipped (17)	0%	35.3%	35.3%	23.5%	5.9%
How does the flipped classroom help you learn the materials compared to the traditional?					
	Much better	Better	Same	Worse than	Much worse
2 nd Flipped (19)	21.1%	57.8%	21.1%	0%	0%
3 rd Flipped (17)	17.7%	58.8%	17.6%	5.9%	0%
What are you doing when you watch the videos?					
	Listening but doing something else	Listening and watching	Listening, watching and taking notes		
2 nd Flipped (19)	0%	57.9%	42.1%		
3 rd Flipped (17)	11.8%	58.8%	29.4%		
How often do you do each of the following activities when watching the videos?					
		Always	Sometimes	Never	
2 nd Flipped	Pause (19)	36.8%	63.2%	0%	
	Rewind (18)	16.7%	61.1%	22.2%	
	Rewatch (18)	11.1%	61.1%	27.8%	
	Fast Forward (18)	5.6%	33.35	61.1%	
3 rd Flipped	Pause (17)	35.3%	52.9%	11.8%	
	Rewind (17)	17.7%	52.9%	29.4%	
	Rewatch (17)	17.7%	64.7%	17.6%	
	Fast Forward (17)	5.9%	35.3%	58.8%	
How did the following materials help your understanding?					
		Helpful	Not Sure	Waste of Time	
2 nd Flipped	Video Lectures (19)	84.2%	15.8%	0%	
	Homework (19)	89.5%	10.5%	0%	
	In-class discussion (19)	73.7%	21.0%	15.3%	
3 rd Flipped	In-class activities (19)	89.5%	10.5%	0%	
	Video Lectures (17)	82.4%	17.6%	0%	
	Homework (17)	100%	0%	0%	
	In-class discussion (17)	76.5%	23.5%	0%	
	In-class activities (17)	94.1%	5.9%	0%	

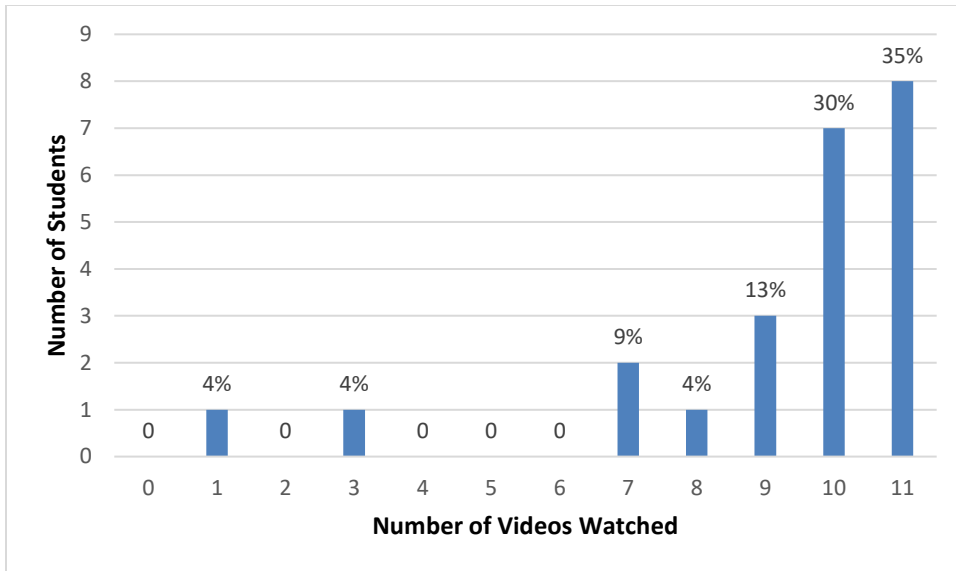


Fig. 1. Frequency of the number of videos watched by students

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