Chapter 82

To Flip Or Not To Flip? That's *Not* The Question:
Exploring Flipped Instruction in Technology Supported Language Learning Environments

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ABSTRACT

Although the literature on flipped instruction to date appears to be relatively atheoretical, the benefits listed in the flipped literature fit well with theories of optimal learning environments (e.g., Egbert, Hanson-Smith, & Chao, 2007) and student engagement (Lin, 2012, and others). This conceptual paper links flipped instruction to these two models and then briefly describes an ESL teacher education course that involves U.S. pre-service teachers learning Chinese online as part of a flipped classroom. The paper concludes by suggesting how flipped instruction might work in other CALL contexts and related issues.

INTRODUCTION

Much has been written lately about the "new" method of "flipped" instruction and its potential to revolutionize instruction across disciplines (see, for example, Bates & Galloway, 2012; Bergmann & Sams, 2012). However, not much on this topic appears in the CALL literature. Such ideas need to be explored and assessed, and effective uses of technology to support student learning must be constantly updated and shared. Therefore, this paper explores flipped instruction in CALL classrooms. The purposes of this conceptual paper are: 1) establishing a theoretical basis for

flipped instruction by relating it to two models, one of conditions for optimal language learning environments (Egbert, Chao, & Hanson-Smith, 2007) and the other of task engagement (Lin, 2012), and 2) briefly describing and assessing an ESL teacher education course that involves U.S. pre-service teachers learning a foreign language online as part of a flipped classroom. To conclude this paper, we suggest how flipped instruction might work in other CALL contexts and related issues. With this work we hope to initiate discussion and research on flipped instruction as part of the CALL repertoire.

Defining Flipped Instruction

Like many terms that come into the education lexicon and are taken up in a variety of contexts, flipped instruction does not yet have a set definition that is used across media. In U.S. settings from K-adult classrooms and in disciplines as distinct as math and history, strategies for flipping that appear similar have even been given different names. For example, Eric Mazur of Harvard found that computer-aided instruction allowed him to "coach" instead of "lecture"; he called his model *peer instruction* (Mazur, 1991). Baker (2000) coined the term "classroom flip" in the late 1990s when describing his strategy of presenting course content on a course management system, allowing opportunities for active learning during class time. Similarly, Lage, Piatt, and Treglia (2000) introduced *inverted instruction*, a strategy which allowed them to differentiate instruction through the use of computer-based lectures and student-centered class time.

Regardless of what it is called and how it is implemented, the overall purpose of flipped instruction is to change classroom dynamics by using technology to present direct instruction outside of class. This frees the instructor

and class time for more interactive tasks and additional scaffolding, including team work, individual conferences with the teacher, group and class discussions, and even reiteration of the content where needed (Bergmann & Sams, 2012; Baker, 2000; Kim, Byun, & Lee, 2012; Lage, Platt, & Treglia, 2000). In part, the idea is to give students some control over class content by providing ways for them to direct the pacing of the material, to provide multiple modes for students who learn in different ways, and to allow students to decide what and how they need to learn. Adherents explain that instructors can

Flip [instruction] so that students watch and listen to your lectures for homework, and then use your precious class-time for what previously, often, was done in homework: tackling difficult problems, working in groups, researching, collaborating, crafting, and creating. Classrooms become laboratories or studios, and yet content delivery is preserved. (Martin, 2011)

The way this has been traditionally interpreted in schools, entire K-12 districts, and higher education classrooms, is generally that students watch instructional content videos outside of class and then work on problems in class. The Khan Academy (http://www.khanacademy.org/), one of the most commonly used websites for instructional videos, exemplifies this approach. It provides videos in math, science, and humanities areas that are supported by self-placement quizzes and discussion posts. A Ted Talk by the founder, Salman Khan, explains the philosophy and workings of the online Academy (see it online at http://www.ted.com/talks/salman_khan_let_s_use_video_to_reinvent_education.html). Overall, the goal of flipped instruction is to engage and support students to achieve.

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