Chapter 6
Cultural Conceptions of Flipped Learning:
Examining Asian Perspectives in the 21st Century

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ABSTRACT

The use of flipped learning as a pedagogical approach has increased in the 21st century. While there is an existing survey of literature regarding the development in American educational institutions – and fewer in an Asian context – there are some unique cultural considerations that may need to be examined regarding flipped learning's adoption and adaptation in Asia. This paper serves as a literature review focusing on several Asian nations with respect to three major considerations in comparison to the United States: geographical, educational, and cultural. After the comprehensive review, which comments on the number of relevant publications available per nation, this paper concludes that there is no significant barrier to the implementation of flipped learning in Asia beyond the existing considerations apparent in the United States (access, time, and institutional support). Additionally, the prevalence of flipped learning in Asia, and the purposes of various studies surveyed, indicate that cultural barriers, at least in this area, are becoming less notable or authoritative as national or historical distinctions are diminishing through Millennials' tendencies toward globalization.

INTRODUCTION

The 21st century has allowed, for conceivably the first time in human history, the ability for diverse nations and cultures to communicate synchronously and cohesively on subjects of education, technology, and culture. This process has the potential to raise many questions about how these three subjects interact. One important question is how specific contexts of specific cultures can impact theories and practices in educational pedagogy. This is especially true of pedagogical approaches that are available, perhaps, across the globe but may not be so easily adaptable. One specific approach, for example, is

flipped learning. This model - which has its origins in the United States (Bergmann & Sams, 2009; Lage, Platt & Treglia, 2000; Mazur, 1997) - can be utilized globally if there is available technology or school structures to support it. However, can it be utilized regardless of different cultural perspectives?

This paper argues that the flipped learning approach is an effective method of instruction that, with the appropriate infrastructure, can be successfully utilized in various cultural contexts. A thorough review of the current literature pertaining to the Western (as evidenced by the United States) and Eastern (including literature from six Asian nations) adaptations of this model was conducted to seek commonalities and differences in approaches. Within the larger umbrella of Eastern/Asian identification, are there individual variations within this larger, complex structure that align to Western approaches? Following this review, the perspective gained will be used to understand the adaptability of flipped learning between different cultures and to address future research within this growing field.

Flipped Learning

Flipped learning, also known as the "inverted" classroom, is a pedagogical model in which teacher-centered content (i.e. direct instruction) is recorded - or pre-existing materials are curated through sources like Khan Academy (Khan, 2012) - and delivered outside of the classroom, typically online (Bergmann & Sams, 2009). This allows for class time to be spent actively applying the lecture content through exercises, discussion, or projects. Essentially, the traditional class content and homework are flipped, allowing students to demonstrate their understanding and teachers to more actively monitor student comprehension and misconceptions all in the classroom. This creates a unique dynamic in which the teacher's role shifts from "the sage on the stage" to instead a "guide on the side", a shift that some flipped learning proponents see as an essential reversal in roles (Baker, 2000; Siegle, 2014).

There are some challenges that are associated with this model, particularly with the digital divide and increased teacher preparation (Bergmann & Sams, 2009). The application of flipped learning may also encounter issues in settings that lack student independence, or emphasize in-class content acquisition for high-stakes testing. In either situation, emphasizing the instructor's dominating presence is contrary to flipped integration. However, flipped learning can be approached in several different ways to anticipate these issues. Some instructors choose to flip a single unit or subject, allowing instructors to prioritize learning goals (Ash, 2012) while others flip their entire schools to increase efficacy of student access through institution-sponsored programs (Green, 2013). Monitoring of student capabilities and curricular goals is crucial. No matter how the model is delivered, the underlying goal of the flipped learning process is that the teacher-centered lesson content is presented out of class, allowing for active application in-class (Bergmann & Sams, 2009; Lage, Platt, & Treglia, 2000).

Flipped Learning Research in the United States

In the United States, the 20th century has revealed a shift away from teacher-centered, direct instruction, which had been in place in the previous century to prepare students for a life as a laborer by teaching them the basic skills needed to be successful in industry (Collins & Halverson, 2010). Today, there is a push for student-centered pedagogies, especially those that encourage student self-regulation and ownership of their learning (Deslauriers, Schelew, & Wieman, 2011; McLoughlin & Lee, 2010). Flipped learning could potentially compliment this shift as an approach that has been shown to promote higher-order thinking skills including evaluation, problem solving, and critical thinking (Baker, 2000; Davies, Dean

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