Chapter 39
The i²Flex Instructional Methodology Implemented in Middle School Classes for Young EFL and Foreign Language Learners

Jenny Eugenia Grigoropoulos
American Community Schools (ACS) Athens, Greece

Heike Arnold
American Community Schools (ACS) Athens, Greece

ABSTRACT

Teachers engaging in the i²Flex teaching methodology employ constructivism-based media in order to update their practices according to the students' changing needs with reference to their education. As a result, students are more eager to learn in a positive environment, and more likely to reach their potential which leads to higher academic performance levels. The authors present and discuss the i²Flex instructional methodology as they implemented it in Middle School Classes for young EFL and Foreign Language learners. Students are active participants of the process. The teacher changes hats from being the instructor in the limited sense of the direct instructor in a teacher centered classroom environment, to being an effective facilitator of the process of education, eventually. The lesson plans change, the media through which they will be delivered also change to be adding to, or even omitting at times, the traditional textbook.

INTRODUCTION

Education is a social process; education is growth; education is not preparation for life but life itself.
John Dewey (John Dewey Quotes, 2015)

How can a 77 year old quote guide us educators through our modern endeavors in teaching? How can it lead us from the traditional teacher-centered methodology of pedagogical goals to the independent,

flexible technology supported learning? How can it engage us into inspiring activities, employing guided, face-to-face, and independent learning, leaving perceptions of teaching to progress into the blended learning? All this eventually led to the invention of the i^{2}Flex, an applied teaching methodology. i^{2}Flex stands for: independent, inquiry-based student learning which is led through Face-to-Face, Flexible, Guided instructions supported by technology (Avgerinou, Gialamas, & Tsoukia, 2014).

Based on the inspiring imagery of this quote by John Dewey, the intention of this book chapter is to demonstrate how the innovative instructional methodology i^{2}Flex has been implemented in ACS Middle School Classes for young EFL and Foreign Language Learners. In the introduction the authors will emphasize three essential components that determine the conceptual framework of the ensuing implementation and conclusion sections of the chapter. These components consist of the ACS Athens educational philosophy, reference features of foreign language teaching, and the terminological definition of i^{2}Flex. In the implementation section both authors will outline a detailed explanation of their methodological procedures, launching (initiating) the i^{2}Flex methodology into practice. In her subchapter, Ms. Jenny Grigoropoulos has been implementing i^{2}Flex ESL (English as a Second Language) and EFL (English as a Foreign Language) classes in middle school. Her essential (major) challenge was how to instruct efficiently the highly technology competent, as well as the less competent students by incorporating instructional tools to engage, while inspiring them, to become the creators and architects of their own learning. She will present the procedure she followed through with her EFL students with very limited knowledge of English, describe the procedure, lesson plan, and delivery of the instructional unit and conclude with her evaluation on the outcome using Community of Inquiry (CoI) (Swan, Garrison & Richardson, 2009) survey to connect student satisfaction with the learning experience (Appendices 2 and 3).

In her subchapter, Ms. Heike Arnold, teacher of German as a foreign language, will outline her investigations, with focus on her German 1 beginner class 2014/2015. In alignment to an exposition of her educational perception as a foreign language teacher and to the description of her target group, she will elucidate the procedure of teaching and learning through which the i^{2}Flex methodology was portrayed in her beginner class, followed by a reflective evaluation basically oriented towards the CIPP evaluation model of Daniel L. Stufflebeam (Mazur, 2013; Zhang et al., 2011).

In the conclusion, the authors will define their experiences in the classrooms and the learning outcomes will be critically evaluated under the umbrella of the introductory exposed conceptual framework and followed by supportive recommendations, which will close this chapter's contribution.

BACKGROUND

ACS Educational Philosophy

ACS Athens is a student-centered, international school which embraces the American philosophy, principles, and values. The school has been constantly working on the creation of new teaching paths, to reach the optimum learning experience for its students. The Global Morfosis Paradigm (Avgerinou, Gialamas, & Tsoukia, 2014) and as a result the educational philosophy of ACS Athens is conceptually based on the smooth transition of the traditional educational philosophy into the updated/modern media-supported competence. The school's mission statement, besides describing ACS Athens as a student-centered international school, also emphasizes that "through excellence in teaching and diverse

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