Chapter 4
Flipped Instruction for Language Learning

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this chapter is to prepare teachers of English as a Second Language (ESL) to utilize flipped models of instruction to better prepare their students in content subjects. This chapter is relevant to educators, school districts, administrators, colleges, and universities. Flipped instruction enables students to engage in more critical thinking skills, while instructors guide their learning. Flipping instruction uses students’ input and thought processes as opposed to the direct lectures. The flipped instruction uses technology, which has great potential to hold student’s attention, while at the same time building critical thinking processes. Case studies of showing the success flipped instruction are available; however, there is a scarcity of flipped instruction research in the ESL classroom. ESL Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) affords students opportunities to explain, question, and develop their language skills as well as their own thinking.

INTRODUCTION

In utilizing the “flip learning” model of teaching, instructors enable students to develop their higher order thinking and research skills to delve into subject matter in more depth. In “flipping” learning, the instructor becomes a coach and guides the discussions using questioning techniques, rather than driving the entire instruction.

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The instructional setting incorporates what students have researched and present in cooperative learning groups. The materials and manipulatives are provided by the instructor. The students in small, cooperative groups use labs, instructional materials, and digital research gathered prior to class (usually obtained through homework or research). Harvard professor Eric Mazur designed this style of instruction, which he called peer instruction (Crouch and Mazur, 2001). The use of instructional materials and online videos are used by the educator to guide and the students’ learning processes. Class discussions are guided by the instructor enable students to gain knowledge through collaborative learning.

Flipped learning for English as Second Language (ESL) learners delivers two things. First, the instruction includes a discussion model, which enables the students to use their English while at the same time, allowing them to utilize their L1 (first language) while learning their L2 (second language). The second and most important aspect of flipped learning is that students are not seen as blank slates, but rather people who bring information and knowledge to the table for discussion. The differentiation of instruction is a great benefit of using “flipped instruction.” Students are able to work at their own pace, while the teacher enables the student to master the subject matter while decreasing anxiety through flexible assessment. For ESL learners, this is an effective method since the apex of learning the target language (TL) depends upon many variables and the length of time studying the subject matter as trans-language learning occurs using L1.

This study may be beneficial to educators, policy makers, school districts, and administrators as an aid to understanding the problems and challenges faced by educators and students through the incorporation of flipping instruction for increase in CALP (Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency) language learning. This study can also help administrators and policy makers better understand the need for concrete frameworks of instructional design.

BACKGROUND

Jonathan Bergmann and Aaron Sams are credited with ground-breaking the concept of flipped instruction (2012). These two chemistry high school teachers began with the notion of using technology to help their high school students who missed courses or some part of the lecture due to extra-curricular high school athletic and other activities. They used screencasts of recorded lectures, homework, slide presentations, and chemistry demonstrations. Their investment in keeping their students interested in their courses ended up with two astonishing results. The first was that students began interacting more in class because they did not worry about losing class time. The second was that students who were having problems keeping up with the course
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