Chapter 11

Studies of Flipping Classes with Asian Students

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ABSTRACT

This chapter offers definitions of “Flipping Classes” (FC), which are classes that shift learning responsibility towards students and employ more media outside of class to help learners prepare to contribute more during classroom time. Its primary purpose is to increase student engagement by the wiser use of CALL, TELL and SMALL (Social Media Enhanced Language Learning). In support of these aims, this chapter examines “Flipped Classroom” instruction with the purpose of mining applications and websites that can help teachers flip their classes more effectively. Using FC, students are more engaged and enjoy preparing for their lessons out of class. They also gain confidence and communication skills as they present in class. Various definitions and examples of flipped classes will be presented, and its educational aims discussed.

INTRODUCTION: DEFINING AND APPLYING FLIPPED CLASSROOM METHODS

The second part of Ferlazzo’s Education Week Teacher series (2014) on the flipped classroom is titled “Flipped Learning Makes Teachers More Valuable.” In it, Jonathan Bergmann was asked a disturbing question by state educational representatives as follows. “Will we be able to hire less teachers due to flipped classes?” He became unglued, stating that they had completely missed the point of the flipped classroom, which is to employ wise teachers who know how to engage learners with more media-rich educational applications that shift responsibility for learning onto the shoulders and minds of students themselves. Teachers then become facilitators of learning by working with students in small groups and interacting with them one-on-one.

The point and purpose of “flipping classes” towards more student autonomy and responsibility is not to increase teacher unemployment, but rather to increase student engagement by wiser use of CALL (Computer Assisted Language Learning), TELL (Technology-Enhanced Language Learning) and SMALL
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mobile-enhanced E-Learning (or Social Media Enhanced Language Learning). In support of these aims, let’s look at some definitions of “Flipped Classroom” instruction.

One often sees the metaphor of “flipping or turning the traditional class on its head,” as in the following sources:

1. The Flipped Classroom: Turning the Traditional Classroom on its Head (Knewton, 2011). Many educators are experimenting with the idea of a flipped classroom model. Find out what it is and why everyone’s talking about it.
2. Flipped Classroom: Software program maker TechSmith states, “By implementing the flipped learning approach, teachers are able to save time, build stronger relationships with students, and let students take control of their own learning” (n.d.).
3. There are many additional articles and blogs are available on the TechSmith website. For example, Erik Christensen discusses his successful approach to the flipped classroom approach in his blog To Flip or Not to Flip Your Classroom (2015).

Surveying Various Definitions of “Flipped Classrooms”

The University of Queensland in Australia has an extensive E-Learning website. There they quote Vanderbilt University’s Center for Teaching’s definition of flipped classrooms:

The flipped classroom describes a reversal of traditional teaching where students gain first exposure to new material outside of class, usually via reading or lecture videos, and then class time is used to do the harder work of assimilating that knowledge through strategies such as problem-solving, discussion or debates (n.d. [emphasis added]).

Laura March (2012) of Pennsylvania State University explains how flipped classrooms are different from traditional classes.

In many traditional courses, students passively listen to lectures during class time and working on assignments on their own. In a flipped course, the lecture content is recorded. Students watch it before coming to class and then class time is used for engaging activities such as discussion, debates, research, and problem solving.

A good summary of some major pedagogical principles followed by this approach are these related by Brame (n.d.) at Vanderbilt’s University’s Guide to flipped classrooms (emphasis added).

- Provide an opportunity for students to gain first exposure prior to class. The mechanism used for first exposure can vary, from simple textbook readings to lecture videos, podcasts, or screencasts.
- Provide an incentive for students to prepare for class. The assignment can vary... from online quizzes to worksheets to short writing assignments, but in each case, the task provided as incentive for students to come to class prepared by speaking the common language of undergraduates: points. In many cases, grading for completion rather than effort can be sufficient.
- Provide a mechanism to assess student understanding. The pre-class assignments that students complete as evidence of their preparation can also help both the instructor and the student assess
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