Chapter 12

Motivating and Empowering Students’ Language Learning in Flipped Integrated English Classes

John Paul Loucky
Seinan JoGakuin University, Japan

ABSTRACT

This chapter offers definitions of “Flipping Classes” (FC), which shift responsibility towards more student autonomy and responsibility, and employ media outside of class to help learners prepare for and contribute during classroom time. FC’s primary purpose is to increase student engagement by the wiser use of CALL/TELL, and SMALL mobile-enhanced E-Learning. Students also enjoy preparing their lessons out of class and gain confidence and communication skills as they present in class. In support of these aims, examples of flipped instruction tools are examined with a view towards mining the best applications and websites. A decade constructing Integrated English courses for Japanese and international graduate engineering students has given the author opportunities to give them increasing access to language learning programs. These classes have also incorporated a Flipped Classroom approach to challenge students to test and collect their own favorite sites into a Symbaloo.com palette of language learning tiles to motivate and empower their language learning.

INTRODUCTION: DEFINING FLIPPED CLASSROOMS

As detailed in Loucky’s chapter “Studies of Flipping Classes with Asian Students” (this book), Jonathan Bergmann stated that many teachers 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. Further, teachers should shift the 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.

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-5225-1803-7.ch012
The 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 mobile-enhanced E-Learning (or Social Media Enhanced Language Learning). See Loucky’s chapter “Studies of Flipping Classes with Asian Students” (this book) detailed definitions of “Flipped Classroom” instruction, some major pedagogical principles, as well as top websites and apps for flipped classrooms.

This chapter focuses on how flipped instruction motivates and empowers language learners.

THE IMPORTANCE OF ENGAGEMENT IN MOTIVATION FACTORS

As Lai, Zhu, and Gong (2014) emphasize in their study, the “Quality of Out-of-class English learning,” active engagement in such activities correlates highly with successful language development. To determine which activities were most beneficial they surveyed 82 EFL students to identify which characteristics of non-classroom activities associated best with good learning outcomes. They found that

out of class learning composed of diversified constituents that met the varied [student] needs in language learning and complemented in-class learning by striking a balance between focus on meaning and focus on form were positively associated with good English grades, English learning efficiency, and enjoyment. (p. 278)

As one would expect, both parents and teachers were significant sources of influence on the quality of out-of-class learning for students. Also not surprising, were findings by Richards (2009) that northern European students showed much better English language growth and achievement than those countries lacking much natural exposure to English, such as Spain, Italy, Korea and Japan.

Most important to this study on the use of Flipped Instruction technology are Lai and Gu’s (2011) finding that “learners who had greater self-regulated language learning dispositions, a stronger belief in seeking language use opportunities beyond the classroom, and greater confidence in their proficiency level were more likely to use technological resources to support language learning beyond the classroom” (p. 281). So clearly, it would be these more autonomous, self-starter and self-regulated learners whom Flipped Instruction methods would help the most.

Current Studies Related to Flipping and Motivation

Two of the most recent studies that are the most relevant to this book’s theme are the following.

2. Lakmal, Abeysekera, and Dawson’s “Motivation and cognitive load in the flipped classroom: Definition, rationale and a call for research” (2015). Their study provides a lowest common denominator catch-all definition of the flipped classroom approach as a set of pedagogical approaches that:
   a. Move most information-transmission teaching out of class,
   b. Use class time for learning activities that are active and social, and