Chapter 11
Engaging Flipgrid:
Three Levels of Immersion

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ABSTRACT
This chapter explores the use of Flipgrid for student engagement in a gradual three-level process of technology integration. The three levels of integration, or “immersion,” are acclimation, movement, and submersion, and this is demonstrated by comparing Flipgrid integration to a day at the beach. Flipgrid is a comprehensive tool that provides opportunities for educators to integrate it into their face-to-face, hybrid, and online courses to a limited extent or to fully use all of the features available to them at no cost. The background of Flipgrid, as well as the benefits of using video as an educational tool, was thoroughly researched to provide evidence to support the use of Flipgrid for student engagement and assessment. The chapter concludes by including the limitations of Flipgrid and future research directions.

INTRODUCTION
Student engagement is essential in the variety of classes available to college students today, including traditional face-to-face, fully online, and blended courses. All three types should include student involvement in meaningful educational activities (Kuh, 2003). One tool that can easily be used in face-to-face, blended, and online courses is Flipgrid (https://flipgrid.com/), a video response platform designed for student engagement and formative assessment. Flipgrid can be incorporated into college classrooms to varying degrees from one-time use to full-feature incorporation. Using a trip to the ocean as an analogy, Flipgrid users can enjoy a day at the beach by playing in the sand, dipping their toes in the water, or diving into the ocean. These three levels of Flipgrid immersion are acclimation, movement, and submersion, which are explained throughout this chapter (Craig, 2018). These levels provide for the incorporation of good practices in undergraduate education (Chickering & Gamson, 1987). Using teacher- and student-created videos as part of a learning experience in higher education can lead to a higher level of student engagement and better academic outcomes.

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BACKGROUND

Flipgrid, originally named “Vidku,” was the tech startup brainchild of a college professor, Charles Miller, and his graduate students at the University of Minnesota in 2014 (Chang, 2017). This startup had originally planned to launch the product for business but adjusted the strategy in 2016, changed the name to Flipgrid, and redirected their efforts to all levels of the education market (Grayson, 2018). Jim Leslie, CEO of Flipgrid, said in a 2015 interview with the Minneapolis/St. Paul Business Journal, “We didn’t invent video and we didn’t invent video sharing…what’s unique is we’re allowing people to have meaningful interaction on their own schedule and own convenience.” (Grayson, 2015). Part of Flipgrid’s success in the education market place is their commitment to educators: listening to and engaging teachers of all levels to create a useful product. In 2018, Microsoft acquired Flipgrid and made the platform free for all educators. Founder Charlie Miller said the joining of Flipgrid to the Microsoft community is “not just making Flipgrid free but bringing student voice to everyone and empowering every learner to share their voice” (Flipgrid, 2018e). Flipgrid’s vice president of engagement, Joey Taralson, acknowledged in a tweet and on a blog that the success of Flipgrid is due to many educators using Flipgrid in unique and unimaginable ways: “We are here because of you. YOU ARE FLIPGRID” (Taralson, 2018).

According to Flipgrid’s website (https://flipgrid.com), Flipgrid is used by millions of Pre-K to PhD educators, students, and families in more than 180 countries. Flipgrid regularly updates its features and has a strong social media presence of educator advocates called “Flipgrid Ambassadors.” Flipgrid holds monthly webinars, monthly Twitter chats, and has an active Slack channel and Microsoft Teams workspace exclusively for Flipgrid Ambassadors. All the latest features are released through this network of educators. Once a simple platform, Flipgrid has evolved into a complete educational technology tool for all levels of educators, with many innovative features available at no cost to the user.

Student-created videos that use the Flipgrid tool incorporate Chickering and Gamson’s (1987) seven principles: (1) encourages student/faculty contact, (2) develops cooperation among students, (3) uses active-learning techniques, (4) gives prompt feedback, (5) emphasizes time on task, (6) communicates high expectations, and (7) respects individual differences. This engagement is possible through the various features built into Flipgrid, which are further explained in this chapter. Student-created videos also incorporate International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) standards for educators. ISTE is the leading global community of educators whose mission includes harnessing the power of technology to transform teaching and learning, solving problems in education, and increasing innovative practices. The educator standards reinforce many of Chickering and Gamson’s principles through a set of standards that include the various roles educators play in the integration of technology, including learner, leader, citizen, collaborator, designer, facilitator, and analyst (ISTE, 2017). These standards lay the groundwork for successful technology integration in schools and higher education institutions.

Ultimately, as with every educational technology, the focus must remain on pedagogy and not on the tool itself. “It’s not about edtech per se, it’s about what you do with the tech to transform learning and improve student outcomes” (ISTE, 2019, para. 2). Educators at all levels are encouraged to make sure that their use of an educational tool is based on the learning outcomes or standards that will result in student learning. Oftentimes, educators will jump on the bandwagon to utilize the latest hyped technology tool without fully considering how the technology tool will benefit their students or solve a problem that they encounter in their classroom. Using video as a tool, including Flipgrid, should be utilized to meet the needs of students and be focused on student learning. Therefore, educators should choose to use Flipgrid at the acclimation, movement, or submersion level based on the student outcomes they are