Can Flipped Learning Increase Motivation?

by Emily Lepkowski

I like the videos because they can be replayed. I can watch again so I can understand— Samantha, fifth grader from Puerto Rico (2014).

With a constantly updating Twitter feed, #flippedlearning is a popular conversation educators from around the world are having on teaching and technology. The pedagogical practice of flipped learning, introduced by Bergmann and Sams (2012), provides students with content or language instruction that can be accessed from a computer, an iPad, or a smartphone. Not only does this technique afford more active learning in the classroom for students, but it also provides students with access to technology they can interact with and have opportunities to produce with later. Finally, the greater repercussions of this approach should be considered. Flipped learning can improve access to, knowledge of, and relationships with technology, which Kelly (2008) notes can often be negative for low-income, ethnic, linguistic and cultural minority students and their families.

I began using flipped learning in my elementary ESL classroom three years ago while looking for a way to differentiate instruction for student errors in writing. Since then, the research and resources available about flipped learning have become more unified with the formation of the Flipped Learning Network (Arfstrom, McKnight, K., McKnight, P., & Yarbro, 2014).

In my action research, I have found that student engagement and motivation is greatly enhanced when using this model; in addition, it assists in building student independence, differentiation, and additional teacher time for conferring and small-group work.

My workshop at the Long Island TESOL conference, April 25, 2015, at Molloy College, introduced educators to different models of flipped learning, to the technology I use to implement this type of instruction, and to samples of my work as well as students' feedback on the approach. The ESL educators, who came from rich experience and taught across different settings to include elementary and university, were aware of flipped learning, but most had yet to experiment with it in their respective settings. The goal of this article is to share the same resources and informational handouts gathered during the workshop.

Show Me

Though there are many interfaces available for flipped learning, I use Show Me because it is an online learning community that allows you to tag your video so that it is linked with others on the same topic. Conversely, if you are not ready to make your own video, you can search for a

video that would meet the needs of your students. This link provides a how-to for Show Me videos: https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B-Fhv8Jku-aATzVVTXREZXR2N1k/view?usp=sharing

My Process

Because of my age group as well as student access to resources outside of school, I practice the "in" flip model (Gonzalez, 2014) in my classroom to target errors found in student writing, which means I create instructional videos for a small group to watch and to complete activities in class. I use this model because I am concerned about student access to devices and Internet at home, so instead of the traditional flip, where students watch the videos prior to class, my students watch in class. Because of this, for example, I am able to track how many students need clarification with count and noncount nouns. Then, I create a video for those students that includes a mini-lesson and small-group activities that are focused on form. In class, the small group of students completes the video while I work with a different group that has already mastered count and noncount nouns or has other needs. In the follow-up class, students will go back to their writing and edit the errors that they notice after seeing the videos.

Why Flip?

Flipped learning has resulted in increased student engagement and positive changes in behaviors in my classroom. Furthermore, students have provided feedback on why this instructional model is helpful, citing an ability to replay the videos to check for understanding as the greatest reason they liked the model. In addition, students who struggled to work cooperatively showed drastic changes in behavior with this model that resulted in higher academic achievement.

Other research has yielded similar results. At a high-risk high school, Flumerfelt and Green (2013) found that the model produced impressive academic achievement and behavioral improvement. For example, homework rates increased to 100% participation, academic success increased by 11%, and behavior referrals decreased. In a college-level TESOL course, Jamaludin (2014) found that students were more interested in class, asked more questions, and exerted more effort.

Discussion

Most of the educators at the Long Island conference that day were very receptive to integrating this model into their instruction. A few, however, were hesitant because of fear of administrative pushback or their level of technical literacy. We discussed how flipped learning could empower students who had a special interest/talent in technology, how it could increase differentiation in the classroom, and how it could increase motivation for second language learning long term.

If not right away, then when it fits your instruction and your students are ready, try flipped learning. I promise increased engagement, better behavior, more comprehensible input, and a more differentiated classroom.

References

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