Chapter 7
Flipped Learning in TESOL:
Past, Present, and Future

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ABSTRACT

Flipped learning is an innovative educational model in which content that is traditionally presented in class is completed at home, and in class, students work on applying what they have learned at home to engage in interactive and collaborative activities. Over the past five years, flipped learning has found a strong voice within the field of the field of Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL), as evidenced by the rapid increase in conference presentations, research, and publications noting its implementation. In this chapter, the authors provide an overview of the flipped learning approach within English language instruction. Included is a discussion of flipped learning's evolution and an analysis of current research that identifies areas of consensus, issues, and controversies. Finally, the authors offer six recommendations for implementing flipped learning in English language classrooms and conclude with future directions for inquiry into flipped learning in TESOL.

INTRODUCTION

Applications of Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL) in English language instruction have naturally evolved as innovations in technology and pedagogy interact and inform one another, and it is through the interplay between these two areas that a mutual adaptation has occurred. Language teaching and learning has shifted to accommodate digital possibilities, and instructional technology has developed in ways that take into account the unique demands and affordances of language teaching and learning that stand to benefit from such development. As a result, in many contexts and in English as a Second Language (ESL) and English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instruction in particular, the new reality is that CALL, far from its original meaning of *computer-assisted*, has taken on a much more central role.

The recent emergence of *flipped learning*, often referred to as the *flipped classroom approach*, is a prime example of the synergy that this mutually adaptive evolution has produced.

Simply defined, flipped learning is an educational approach in which content that is traditionally presented in class is learned at home, and work that is traditionally completed as homework is done in class. What results from this *flip* is a transformation of the classroom into a "dynamic, interactive learning environment where the educator guides the students as they apply concepts and engage creatively in the subject matter" (Flipped Learning Network, 2014). With the assistance of the latest available technological tools and resources, instructors who flip can create a more interactive learning environment in which their role can dramatically shift from being the "sage on the stage" to the "guide on the side" (King, 1993, p. 30). These resources include ready-made materials that can provide authentic English language input, such as YouTube videos, podcasts, and supplemental materials provided by textbooks, among others. Instructors can also create their own content for videos that is specific to their course objectives and students' levels by using tools such as Screencast-o-matic and Adobe Captivate, as well as recording software available in course management programs (e.g., Kaltura in Blackboard). Finally, there are many tools that can help instructors assess students' learning while they are presented with material at home, including Google classroom, EdPuzzle, and PlayPosit. All of these can be leveraged to support learning outside of class.

An important implication of flipped learning is that it can address one of the major challenges of language instruction, which is the substantial amount of time and exposure needed for second language acquisition. In settings where the target language is not the dominant language, exposure to authentic linguistic input and opportunities to interact in English in a classroom setting are limited (Gass, Behney, & Plonsky, 2013). For example, Doman and Webb (2016) state that flipped learning is particularly needed in places like China, where the communicative language teaching (CLT) method is not implemented effectively and students have few opportunities to use English outside of their English classes. In other countries such as Saudi Arabia, teacher-centered language instruction remains prevalent, leaving English language learners with few opportunities to use English both in and out of class (Al-Harbi & Alshumaimeri, 2016). These challenges are not unique to EFL settings, however. In ESL settings, students may also have limited access to the target language if they retreat to enclaves in their local communities where their first language (L1) is the predominant language or if they have few opportunities to use English.

Flipped learning can address another major challenge that language instructors face, which is the wide range of students' language skills in any given classroom. Regardless of whether they are in ESL or EFL settings, students "often come in with mixed language abilities, different goals, and various learning styles that often cannot be addressed in the confines of the classroom" (Webb & Doman, 2016, p. 45). While no single instructional method can effectively address the wide range of students' diverse learning styles and language learning strategies (Oxford, 2001), the flipped learning approach, as the authors demonstrate in this chapter, can make it possible for the instructor to make individual contact with each student in class and thus stay in tune with every learner's needs.

The purpose of this chapter is to present an overview of flipped learning in the field of Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL), tracing its past, present, and future trajectory. The first section of the chapter explains how flipped learning evolved both in other fields and within TESOL and describes how its application to ESL and EFL language teaching may offer substantial rewards for language learning. Following this overview is an examination of research and implementation of flipped learning in TESOL which identifies areas of consensus, highlights implications for pedagogy, and illustrates how flipped learning intersects with blended and online learning. The authors then address the

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