

FLIPPED CLASSROOM APPROACH IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING

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Jon Bergmann and Aaron Sams have described this approach to instruction as a strategy where work that was 'traditionally done in the class is now done at home, and what was traditionally homework is now completed in class' [1; 91]. Bergmann and Sams were American high school teachers who began 'flipping' their chemistry classes in 2007. They recorded their explanatory lectures so that students could watch these at home, and the students then spent their classroom time working together on practical problems. The term 'flipped learning' is used almost interchangeably with the term 'flipped classroom'. Flipped learning typically involves watching videos online before students come to class, therefore it may also be considered a form of blended learning [1; 94].

Recognizing the limitations of the brief definition of flipped learning, Jon Bergmann and his colleagues stress that flipped learning should not be seen as synonymous with online videos. In fact, there is no absolute need for technology to be involved in any way at all. In terms of procedures and materials, flipped learning offers a very loose model. According to Bergman and Sams, 'there is no single way to flip [a] classroom [...] every teacher who has chosen to flip does so differently'. It is preferable, they write, to think about flipped learning as 'more about a mindset: redirecting attention away from the teacher and putting attention on the learner and learning'[3;82]. Another reason why flipped learning may appeal to language teachers lies in one of its key objectives, which is to provide opportunities for communication between students during class time, as they work together to solve a problem. This will resonate with communicative language teachers who see their primary role as facilitators of meaningful communication between learners. In both flipped and communicative language classrooms, the students are 'engaged in active learning and negotiating meaning'. The potential advantages of flipped learning are summarized below:

1. Personalisation: 1) Helping with specific learning difficulties (SpLDs); 2) Offering a personal choice of study material; 3) Self-pacing; 4) Providing individual support.

2. Active learning: 1) Focusing on 'higher-order skills'; 2) Facilitating increased interaction between students; 3) Creating more opportunities for useful feedback.

3. Engagement and attitudes: 1) Addressing classroom management issues; 2) Encouraging learner 'ownership' of learning; 3) Promoting contact between school and parents / carers

In order to help teachers realize the potential benefits of flipped learning, the Flipped Learning Network (a nonprofit, online community of educators who are interested in flipped learning) has developed a set of four principles (called the 'Four Pillars') to guide instructional practice [2; 46]. These principles are:

1) *A flexible environment:* The traditional arrangement of chairs and desks with students sitting in rows and the teacher at the front is probably not the most conducive to productive, interactive lessons. Rearrangements of furniture may be necessary. At the same time, teachers will need to be more flexible about when their students learn. For teachers to operate in this way, they will usually need institutional approval and support.

2) *Learning culture:* With a shift away from a teacher-centred model of instruction towards a more learner-centred approach, the teacher will need to create meaningful opportunities for all students to interact. Activities should be scaffolded (different students may require different kinds of scaffolding)

and feedback may be personalized to make it more relevant.

3) *Intentional content:* Teachers will need to decide what kind of content they intend to teach themselves and what content may be more accessible when students are working on their own. These decisions will need to be informed by a consideration of how best to maximise the potential of classroom time.

4) *Professional educator*: While the teacher may be less visibly central in flipped approaches, their role is perhaps more important than in traditional classrooms. The planning of learning involves both self-study material and tasks (which may, to some extent, be personalized) and classroom activities. During the class, the teacher will closely monitor their students' work, provide feedback, and assess their work. They will need to keep records of their observations to inform their approaches (to planning and classroom management) in subsequent lessons. In addition, they should reflect on their own practice and collaborate with colleagues in order to improve their teaching. Institutional support will be needed to facilitate this process [2; 54].

The Flipped Classroom Approach has emerged as a transformative model in English Language Teaching (ELT), offering a dynamic shift from traditional teacher-centered instruction to a more student-centered, interactive learning environment. This research has demonstrated that the flipped model not only enhances learner engagement and autonomy but also improves language acquisition by providing increased opportunities for meaningful communication and practice both inside and outside the classroom. While challenges such as technological access and student adaptability remain, the overall findings suggest that with proper planning and support, the flipped approach can significantly enrich the English learning experience. Future studies may focus on long-term impacts and explore its application across diverse linguistic and cultural contexts to further validate its effectiveness.

References

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