

What's on the Internet for Flipping English Language Instruction?

***** On the Internet *****

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Introduction

In July 2015, the authors traveled to Michigan State University to attend FlipCon, the premiere conference for educators who are interested in and passionate about flipping their classes. Participants represented a wide range of educational levels and academic subjects, including science, technology, engineering, arts, and math (STEAM), language arts, foreign languages, nursing, and business, among others. This year, FlipCon brought over 500 “flippers” together from the United States and abroad, both in-person and virtually, to discuss the latest tools and approaches for flipped instruction via hands-on workshops, social events, and poster sessions.

In addition to the annual conference, educators can connect via The Flipped Network (<http://flippedlearning.org/Domain/4>), an organization whose mission is to provide flippers with the knowledge, skills, and resources to successfully implement flipped learning. The Flipped Network (FLN) website includes links to videos that teachers can use to flip, announcements for events related to flipped learning, how-to videos for less experienced flippers, archived webinars, and descriptions of books related to the flipped approach. In addition, the Flipped Network houses the Flipped Learning Community (FLC), which connects 25,000 educators from around the world who share resources and best practices; teachers can join the FLC at no cost by creating an account. The FLN also has a strong presence on social media, and teachers can follow the group on Twitter

(@flippedlearning), which currently includes over 8,200 followers, and/or join the Flipped Class Network group on Facebook, which includes over 1,100 members (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/485599361454040/>).

The flipped approach is steadily gaining popularity in the field of TESOL (Teachers of English as a Second Language). At the 2015 TESOL Convention in Toronto, Canada, there were more sessions related to flipping than ever before; we have also noticed that interest in the flipped approach is growing in our regional TESOL affiliates (i.e., CATESOL and MATSOL). Nevertheless, few pedagogically-oriented materials exist for instructors who flip or are interested in flipping their classes. In this article, we will first discuss the main tenets of the flipped approach, highlighting relevant implications for flipping English as a Second Language (ESL) and English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classes. We will then describe several Internet-based tools that we have used to flip our English for Academic Purposes (EAP) classes.

What is flipping?

One of the most common definitions we have heard about the flipped approach is “homework is done in class and class work is done at home.” While the flipped approach does indeed flip the work done in class, this simplistic definition does not quite capture its essence. According to the Flipped Learning Network (2014), the flipped approach occurs when

...direct instruction moves from the group learning space to the individual learning space, and the resulting group space is transformed into a dynamic, interactive learning environment where the educator guides the students as they apply concepts and engage creatively in the subject matter.

Perhaps the most important implication for language teaching is that the flipped approach promotes interaction and creativity, which is key to boosting students’ language production and collaboration. We often have limited contact time with our students, particularly if we teach in a context where English is not the dominant language and exposure and opportunities for practice are limited. Webb, Doman, and Pusey (2014) aptly noted that the flipped approach extends classroom learning by “shifting the physical location of the classroom to anywhere an Internet or Wi-Fi connection exists, be it a café, a library, a bus, or even a beach” (p. 54). As a result, instructors can engage in even more one-to-one conversations with students and spend more time interacting and working with them in small groups .

Flipping ESL/EFL instruction

Although research on flipped learning in TESOL is relatively scarce, a growing amount of work has provided meaningful insights for teaching. First, a flipped approach may foster independent language learning. Han (2015) reported on a flipped approach that was used to teach oral communication skills to adult learners at a community college. The instructor asked students to watch grammar tutorials on YouTube for homework and explain what they learned to each other in class. Han found that students’ oral fluency improved along

with the quality of the grammar explanations they reproduced after watching the videos. For another assignment, students used Google Voice to create oral presentations outside of class. Even students without a high comfort level or familiarity with technology were able to participate because they could use any configured phone to call the instructor's Google forwarding number to leave a message. Despite pronunciation not being directly taught as part of the course, a surprising finding was that students used Google Voice to improve their pronunciation; they often left more than one draft for one message, which built their oral fluency and allowed them to replay their recordings to analyze their improvement. Overall, Han found that by combining cooperative exercises in the classroom with user-friendly technology outside the classroom, all major skills for the course were covered and cooperative learning was fostered.

Another important insight is that a flipped approach "flips" Bloom's taxonomy of higher-order skills upside down (Brinks Lockwood, 2014). In a traditional classroom, instructors present material and expect students to comprehend and remember, the two lowest, and presumed easiest skills on Bloom's taxonomy. Instructors then send students home to apply, analyze, synthesize, and evaluate using the material from class, which challenges them to use the higher-level Bloom's skills on their own. In a flipped classroom, students work on less cognitively demanding tasks at home and work to comprehend and remember the material the teacher normally would have taught in class. Then, the activities that require the higher-level skills from Bloom's taxonomy are brought into the classroom where students receive help from their instructor and/or peers. The more difficult work is done in class where students have help, and less difficult work is done at home where students often work alone.

Finally, a flipped approach allows English language learners to learn material at their own pace and allows the instructor to differentiate instruction for individual learners, increasing the likelihood that students will comprehend class material (Brinks Lockwood, 2014; Marshall, 2013). A major benefit of this approach is that students can replay videos several times if they need to, pause to look up the meaning of a word, and/or look up a topic in other sources if they need more clarification. In addition, if students need more time to process material delivered in class or if a student was absent on the day a particular point was covered, they do not miss important material because it is always accessible whereas the instructor is not. In other instances, when students need to review a particular detail, they can look it up or watch that portion of a lecture again at any time during the course of the semester. This kind of learning might not necessarily happen in a traditional classroom in which the teacher would need to be available after school hours or whenever students needed extra help.

When we discuss the flipped approach with other ESL and EFL instructors, we tend to hear the same concerns. For instance, we have heard many instructors say that they are not tech-savvy enough to flip their classes. While instructors can and should leverage technology to flip their classes, they do not necessarily have to be technology experts because they can use materials that already exist. We have also heard instructors say that they do not have time to create their own videos. While we feel that students should have some instruction from us via video, not every video has to be teacher-created. What matters most is that students watch quality videos that are appropriate for their level and

connected to the learning objective. Lastly, and perhaps most importantly, we have heard instructors say that language courses are not lecture-based courses, so the flipped approach is neither applicable nor relevant to them. While our field has long discredited teacher-centered instruction, reflecting on the teaching we did before we flipped made us realize that there was more teacher-led activity in our classrooms than we had thought. For instance, we realized that even distributing and going over instructions for a project or leading students through a worksheet takes up valuable class time that could be better spent on interactive activities that require higher-level skills. One of the biggest benefits to flipping is that we can free up class time and maximize the amount of language (i.e., reading, writing, speaking, and listening) that students produce in class and out of class.

What's on the Internet for flipping instruction?

The Internet offers a wide variety of resources that instructors can immediately take advantage of to flip their classes. In the following section, we describe the Internet-based resources that we have used for out of class work and in-class activities.

Out-of-class work

One of the most comprehensive resources for finding and sharing videos is YouTube, as it includes several channels that English instructors can subscribe to. For instance, we have used videos from Smrt English, created by instructors at the Canadian College of English Language, and OSU Flipped ESL, maintained by the ESL programs at The Ohio State University (find URLs in Table 2). Table 1 outlines how we have used these two channels in our respective reading and writing and academic writing courses.

Table 1. Sample lessons that draw from YouTube videos

Ilka's Reading and Writing Course	Robyn's Academic Writing Course
<p>At Home</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students watch a video about paragraph structure (e.g., video from Smrt English, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NLzKqujmdGk. See Table 2 for more resources) Students complete a teacher-created worksheet. 	<p>At Home</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students watch a video about summarizing an academic article (e.g., video from OSU flipped ESL: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oqg7CXm2ZMA. See Table 2 for more resources) Students complete an activity in their writing textbook in which they identify the components discussed in the video. Students choose an article they want to read from their own field of interest.

Ilka's Reading and Writing Course	Robyn's Academic Writing Course
In Class <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instructor collects worksheets and addresses comprehension questions at the beginning of class. • Students work with a partner to analyze a sample paragraph posted by the instructor on a Google doc and highlight structures discussed in the video in different colors (e.g., supporting sentences). Students present their findings to the class. • Students then write a paragraph on a topic connected to that week's reading applying what they learned about paragraph structure. 	In Class <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students compare answers to the activity and the instructor checks and addresses any questions. • Students highlight main points in the article they selected. • Students write the first line to their own summary.
Future Classes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students engage in peer review to evaluate their partner's paragraph. 	Future Classes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students proceed to write an entire article summary and participate in peer review.

In addition to YouTube videos and channels, we have used news websites to flip listening and speaking activities related to current events. Several major media outlets offer free downloadable podcasts and videos, such as the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), National Public Radio in the United States (NPR), and Al Jazeera, among others. Instead of playing a video, lecture, or audio recording in class, students can download a podcast or watch a video at home, taking notes on their own or on a teacher-created worksheet that focuses on a particular element or note-taking strategy (e.g., signal phrases or abbreviations). In class, students would work with the content they learned at home by engaging in debate, designing and performing role plays of an event that occurred, collaborating to determine a solution for the issue, participating in mock trials of controversial cases, creating maps of geographical locations mentioned in the videos, graphing or creating other visuals of the content, or preparing poster presentations or editorials on the topic. All of these in-class activities promote interaction, collaboration, and practical use of higher-order cognitive skills.

In addition to news and current event sites, there are several Internet-based websites that provide content-based podcasts and lectures. For example, in one of our listening and speaking courses, we asked students to watch a lecture at home about air pollution provided by Stanford's Lecture Series and in class, students reviewed content by taking a quiz. The quiz, however, was a team "sport" because questions were placed into a Jeopardy-style template and students competed in teams for points as they answered

questions related to the content of the video. This activity stimulated interaction in class among groups and made it clear to us which student(s) completed the required listening exercise outside of class. The bulk of class time was then spent on supporting students as they applied the details of what they learned to a project (i.e., creating an oral presentation using the sentence frames, determining the air pollution causes and policies for their home city, and synthesizing and evaluating the science-related information they learned from the video). Students worked on their research and presentations in class, where the instructor and students' peers were available to iron out any issues and answer questions.

In Table 2, we have compiled some of the Internet-based resources that we have used to flip our reading and writing and listening and speaking classes.

Table 2. Summary of Internet-based resources for flipping instruction

Source	Links
YouTube Channels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BBC Learning English (https://www.youtube.com/user/bbclearningenglish) • British Council (https://www.youtube.com/user/BritishCouncilLE) • Learn English with Jennifer (https://www.youtube.com/user/JenniferESL) • OSU Flipped ESL (https://www.youtube.com/user/OSUflippedESL) • Oxford Online English (https://www.youtube.com/user/oxfordonlineenglish) • Purdue OWL (https://www.youtube.com/user/OWLPurdue) • Research Channel (https://www.youtube.com/user/ResearchChannel) • SmrtEnglish (https://www.youtube.com/user/smrtenglish) • TOEFL TV (https://www.youtube.com/user/TOEFLtv)
Lectures and podcasts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BBC podcasts (http://www.bbc.co.uk/podcasts) • Stanford Lecture Series (http://web.stanford.edu/dept/lc/efs/2014/summer/index.html) • Ted ED (http://ed.ted.com/) • Yale Open Courses (http://oyc.yale.edu/)
Content-specific lectures and videos	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academic Earth (http://academicearth.org/) • GO Cognitive(http://gocognitive.net/) • Khan Academy (https://www.khanacademy.org/) • National Aeronautics and Space Administration (http://www.nasa.gov/) • Science Friday (http://www.sciencefriday.com)

Source	Links
News and current events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Al Jazeera (English) (http://america.aljazeera.com/watch.html) • BBC Learning English (http://www.bbc.co.uk/learningenglish) • CNN for teachers (http://www.cnn.com/fyi/teachers.lessonplan/) • National Public Radio (http://www.npr.org/podcasts/) • New York Times (http://learning.blogs.nytimes.com/)

While using ready-made videos can save instructors time, we have observed that students tend to prefer that some videos are also created by their teachers. Including a combination of teacher-made and ready-made videos may increase students' buy-in and help them feel connected to their teacher, which in turn cultivates the consultative teacher-student relationship the flipped learning classroom embodies. One tool that we have used to create videos is Screencast-o-matic (<http://www.screencast-o-matic.com/>), which records an unlimited number of fifteen-minute videos (webcam and screen recording). Recording videos with Screencast-o-matic is very easy, and recordings can be either saved as mp4 files, uploaded to the Screencast-o-matic site, or uploaded to YouTube. Screencast-o-matic is free, but users can pay a fee (\$15.00 USD) per year in order to have access to all of the tool's functions (e.g., editing tools and unlimited recording length).

We have used Screencast-o-matic to create a video that introduces students to the Purdue Online Writing Lab (OWL). Instead of using class time to give a demonstration of the website and its features, as we had done in the past, we created a video about the Purdue OWL website for students to watch at home and checked comprehension by collecting students' notes. In class, students worked with a partner on a scavenger hunt we created that asked them to find specific information on the website (e.g., "If you had a question about gerunds and infinitives, where on the site would you find the answer?" "What kinds of exercises can you find in the ESL section?"). The benefit of creating a personalized video about the Purdue OWL is that instructors can highlight elements of the website that are relevant to their particular course. For instance, if students are working on a research paper in a writing course, instructors can focus on explaining the APA section of the site. Figure 1 shows a screenshot of Screencast-o-matic as it was used to record an introductory video for the Purdue OWL website.

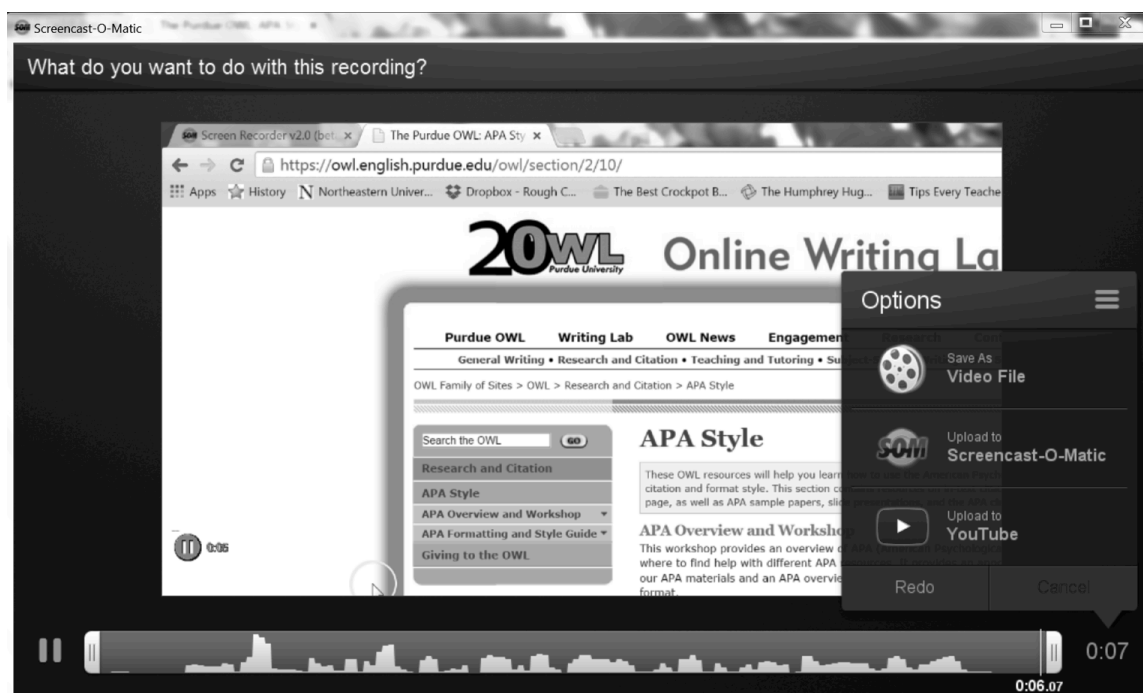


Figure 1. Creating a video about the Purdue OWL using Screencast-o-matic

As we mentioned above, we feel that instructors should ideally use a combination of both teacher-made videos and ready-made videos. One simple way we have used both is preparing students for the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL). TOEFL TV, a YouTube channel (see link in Table 2), offers numerous videos that review the skills tested on TOEFL, such as test-taking tips (e.g., the importance of creating an effective outline to write the timed essay) and advice for practicing (e.g., how to practice the speaking portion alone at home). These videos supplemented videos we created and/or material we gave to students to review at home. The advantage of providing students with both resources is that they receive explanations from two different instructors, and the advice and test-taking tips they learn about in these videos helps reinforce the advice and tips given in class.

Finally, we would like to point out that textbooks often include an online component that includes extra activities for learners. These activities can either be assigned as homework or done in class, depending on what skills are being taught. For example, several books by the University of Michigan Press have accompanying websites that offer vocabulary exercises for extra practice. Publishers often offer course management systems that allow instructors to plan and manage the assignments for their learners. In addition, these sites sometimes include grading tools and user statistics; instructors can see, for example, not only if students did the assigned homework, but also how many times they attempted certain activities and which scores they earned.

In-class Work

Asking students to work on lower-level comprehension skills at home frees up class time for them to apply what they have learned and use the top of Bloom's higher-level cognitive skills with the help of the instructor and their peers (Brinks Lockwood, 2014). Graphic organizers, or "mind maps," are a useful way for students to use Bloom's higher order thinking skills in class, and mind maps can be used for both reading and listening activities. For instance, if students read an essay at home or watch a lecture and take notes, they could work together in class to design a mind map that represents the content they have read or listened to.

Bubbl.us (<https://bubbl.us/>) is a user-friendly tool that can be used for a wide range of collaborative activities that ask students to organize and connect ideas. Students begin by entering one central idea in the yellow bubble in the middle of the mind map then work on expanding their ideas into supporting bubbles, including as many or as few as they like. We have asked students to create mind maps in the past using the chalkboard or giant poster-sized paper; however, Bubbl.us is more useful because students can work on their mind maps over multiple days without needing to carry them around, easily delete text and edit as they work, and send links of their work to each other. We should note, however, that users are only allowed to have three free mind maps to try out the software. Then they have the option to participate in a 30-day free trial, after which they can choose to continue with the software and pay a fee to upgrade. Nevertheless, discounts are available for teachers and students if an image of an institutional identification card is shown or if teachers or students register using their institution's email account. Figure 2 provides a screenshot of a blank Bubble.us mind map.

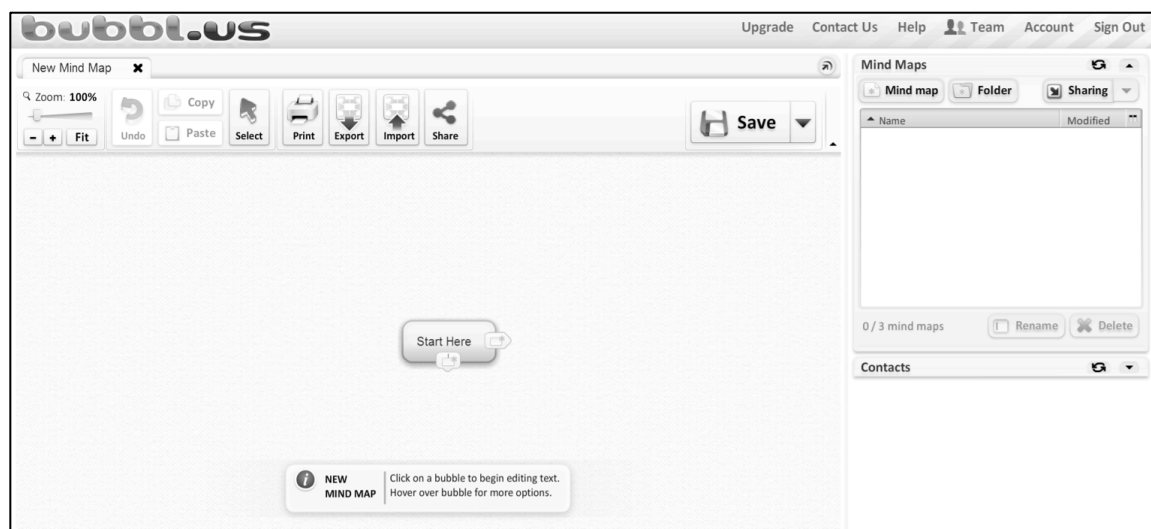


Figure 2. Screenshot of Bubbl.us

Another resource that can be used for in-class activities is Padlet (<http://padlet.com>). Padlet is a free and easy-to-use tool that supports a wide variety of in-class activities. A padlet is essentially a blank bulletin board that allows students to simultaneously and

anonymously create text boxes with a 150-word limit. Once the teacher has created a Padlet account, which is free to do, s/he can share a link with students that takes them to a particular Padlet. From there, students can double-click anywhere on the padlet and post their text. Instructors can choose the layout of the padlet, arranging text boxes in a table or allowing students to scatter text boxes around the screen. Padlet is now also available as an iPad app.

One way we have used Padlet is for compiling the academic language used in literature reviews. In one recent writing class, students read a peer-reviewed research article at home that related to the topic of their research paper; they also filled out a chart that asked them to summarize the main components of the article (e.g., the research objective, methods, findings, conclusions, and their own thoughts about the study). In class, students generated a list of the language chunks they found in their articles (e.g., *Few studies have examined...*) and discussed their function (e.g., to describe gaps in the literature). Each pair then put these language chunks on Padlet and discussed them as a class, synthesizing similar chunks and evaluating their purpose in an article. The activity aimed to raise students' awareness of the metalanguage used in published academic writing and provide them with a list of words and phrases that they could use when writing their own papers. Figure 3 includes a screenshot of the academic language students generated and analyzed in class.



Figure 3. Padlet screen shot of academic language generated in class

Finally, Google also offers user-friendly tools that can support a flipped approach. As we described in Table 1, if students are learning to write a paragraph, they could watch a video about paragraph structure at home then in class, work with a partner to analyze a sample paragraph on a Google doc. Each pair would label the various components of a paragraph using different colors and/or comment boxes. The benefit of using Google docs is that students and the instructor can contribute to it, documents save automatically every few seconds, and the instructor can either project docs on a large screen or ask students to look at the doc together on their own computers. Using Google tools is also beneficial for gaining student buy-in, as it is likely that students already have Google accounts and are familiar with its features.

What do students think about flipping?

As we have reflected on our teaching and gathered feedback from our students at both of our institutions, we have found that they generally hold positive views of the flipped approach. Students have reported that class time is productive and engaging, videos are useful because they have the time they need to learn the material, and the flipped approach can encourage independent learning. These reported benefits align with those in the literature on the flipped approach (e.g., Bergmann, Overmyer, & Wilie, 2013; Brinks Lockwood, 2014; Webb, Doman, & Pusey, 2014). In Table 3, we provide some of the comments we have received from students during the 2014-2015 academic year.

Table 3. Students' feedback about the flipped approach (2014-2015 academic year)

Common themes	Students' comments
More productive use of class time	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• More time to ask the teacher questions.• It's very helpful since we have more practice in class. Students can apply what they've learned right away without wasting time reviewing again.• I really enjoy the activities in class and how active class is, but if I had trouble, I would ask my professor.
More time for learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Videos are so helpful. I can pause it anytime I want if I don't understand something and then do some more research online or replay it until I understand it. I can take my time to take notes. In-class activities and discussions help me remember things better.• Students can save a lot of time in class and have more time to practice in class.• The flipped approach saves time and improves efficiency. It makes tougher tasks easier. I feel more comfortable [watching videos] rather than listening in class because I can get a sandwich, put up my feet, and relax while I watch.
Increased independent learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• I feel like this is a good way to study because the teacher saves class time to teach something challenging, and students learn self-studying. This is one of the most important skills that an individual should master in his whole life because we cannot always be at school, but we have to always keep learning new things.• This helped me for my other courses besides English because those teachers don't help you like English teachers do. You have to study by yourself a lot.

Whereas feedback on our flipped activities has been generally positive, some students have voiced concerns about the videos. As one student noted, "Some videos aren't helpful because I have previously learned the things discussed in them." While this student provided a seemingly constructive comment about the flipped approach, we believe that the comment illustrates precisely why the flipped approach is useful. If the student had been in class listening to an explanation of a concept s/he already knew, class would be less engaging and the student would likely lose interest. Another student reported, "Some students don't watch the videos, so it is very difficult to guarantee that they study in class." This student's comment points to the importance of creating interactive videos not only to increase students' interest and ensure that they learn, but also to ensure that students are prepared for in-class work. All of the feedback we have gathered from students has helped us reflect on the flipped approach and improve our teaching, videos, materials, and activities.

Conclusion

As we hope to have shown, with the wealth of Internet resources available, flipping does not have to be difficult or daunting, and instructors can begin experimenting with one or two flipped activities. Since we began flipping our classes, we have witnessed a transformation in our students both in attitude and performance. We have also found that we enjoy teaching more than we ever have before due to the energy and consultative relationships we cultivate with our students. We believe that the flipped approach holds great promise for English language learning, and we encourage fellow educators to give the flipped approach a try.

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