A Case Study on a Flipped Classroom in an EFL Content Course*

Kiwan Sung (Kyung Hee University)


This study looks into a flipped English content-based class where 12 participating college students were enrolled and completed all the course requirements in an elective course, *English Curriculum and Evaluation*, in Spring, 2014. Before each class, the students were guided to preview lesson materials such as readings and videos and to engage in diverse online activities on an LMS platform. Then, they did collaborative class activities such as sharing their Thought Papers, discussing the questions on weekly readings developed online, and doing a final project of designing an evaluation plan. The results of the analysis of both informal and formal course evaluations and student work showed that they viewed flipped learning positively despite initial difficulties of adjusting themselves to it. They also viewed that flipped teaching can be a good momentum for change in current ELT despite limitations such as test-oriented teaching practices, learner difference in prior learning experiences and in their English proficiency levels, the preparation time and efforts needed for teachers, and the lack of institutional support. Also presented in this study are some challenges and possibilities of utilizing the idea of flipping one’s teaching in the EFL context along with pedagogical suggestions and implications for further research.

**Key words** flipped classroom, flipped teaching, flipped learning, blended learning, learning management system, student-centered instruction, Kakao Talk

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I. INTRODUCTION

Many books and research in the field of ELT still attest that a majority of ESL/EFL classes are teacher-centered, which results in the lack of meaningful interaction along with that of

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student interests and efforts in learning TL (e.g., Brown, 2007; Kim, 2008). In order to overcome such rigid and ineffective teaching practices relying on the transmission of superficial knowledge through rigid educational structures and controls (e.g., lectures, homework, tests, study for a grade or a certificate, rote learning), many educators have long argued for the importance of engendering a student-centered learning environment both in and outside the classroom (Brown, 2007; Vygotsky, 1978). That is, given the postmodern characteristics of the world where there is high social and virtual mobility in terms of both physical and hyper-real contexts, a school or classroom is not the only place for students to learn something. Accordingly, today’s English practitioners ought to take into account learners’ meaningful engagements both inside and outside the classroom to achieve good learning outcomes by creating a more learner-centered learning environment.

In order to change traditional classrooms, some educators now strongly advocate ‘flipped’ teaching in which the student self-studies lesson contents at home through videos, pods, books, website or blogs while class hours are used to do the homework or assignments to reinforce his or her understanding of important concepts or knowledge (Bergmann & Sams, 2012, 2014; Bretzmann, 2013). Such a reverse format of teaching and learning called flipped teaching and learning is known to be initiated and, thus, made popular by Bergmann and Sams, who taught chemistry classes at one of the high schools in the U.S. in 2007 (Flipped Learning Network, 2013). Given that flipping started at a secondary school context, there have been more practical application of its concepts and strategies in secondary school subjects such as math, science, English, social studies, and so on (Bae & Kwon, 2013; Clark, 2015; Lee, 2014; Park, 2014). However, given that no research can be found on the flipping of English classes and roles of the teacher and learners in such a flipped classroom at a college level in Korea, this paper purports to examine the student views on learning English subject matter on the curriculum and evaluation in a flipped classroom along with some detailed descriptions of the activities or tasks done in a college class in Korea.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

For last several years, a number of advocates present strong points of flipped teaching/learning or flipped classroom and promote it highly nowadays. Bergmann and Sams (2012, 2014) argue that classroom time can be used best to reverse the traditional classroom pattern through the use of videos recorded by the teacher (or available online) so that teachers