

Using Flipgrid as an Interactive Application to Improve Filipino Students' Engagement in Language Flexi-Learning

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Abstract

The pandemic's massive impact on schools has pushed teachers and students to migrate online and affected students' class engagement. With this, the action research aimed to 1) analyze the previous experiences of the students with other interactive applications, 2) determine if Flipgrid interactive options are an intervention for improving students' engagement, and 3) evaluate the experiences of the students in using Flipgrid interactive options in asynchronous learning. The research used a practical action research design that utilizes mixed methods to address the study's problem and was conducted at Xavier University – Junior High School in the Philippines. To achieve the desired results, the researchers first gave the interactive questionnaire, followed by a survey questionnaire before and after the implementation of the proposed intervention, and conducted a focus group discussion to gather more in-depth information. Twenty respondents took the pre-test, and 17 took the post-test. The results of the data from the statistics and information gathered during the focus group discussion show that students are favorable of the features of Flipgrid. There is also a highly significant difference between the pre-test and post-test results, which means that the proposed intervention, comment section, and view counts effectively alleviate the challenge of students' engagement in asynchronous learning. Based on the perceived response from the participants, Flipgrid, in general, is a great tool to boost students' engagement. Thus, the researchers recommend that teachers maximize the use of Flipgrid for asynchronous sessions.

Keywords: Flipgrid, Students' Engagement, Asynchronous Learning, Online Learning, Interactive Applications

Introduction

In the Philippines, the proliferation of COVID-19 cases shoots up day by day. This pandemic has brought massive changes not just to the healthcare system and the economy but to academic institutions as well. Students and teachers were forced to resort to online learning as the face-to-face setting was strongly prohibited. Online learning has become the new norm, with a vast number of students taking advantage of it. However, as it has become the mainstream of

learning, a lot of loopholes have been found. One of them is the lack of students' engagement, specifically in asynchronous learning. Students' engagement in asynchronous classes tends to be low because synchronous learning is more effective than asynchronous learning. A study presented by Alhih et al. (2017) claims that there is an increase of interaction in synchronous sessions rather than in asynchronous sessions that enables students to be present simultaneously with the teacher, just like conventional classrooms, which have student-teacher interaction—bringing alarm to the teachers as they need to ensure that learners are still learning despite the new setup.

Teachers are required to stay connected with their students through the use of technology. However, one downside of this is the students' engagement in class on how much they are involved in asynchronous sessions. Students' engagement can be limited only to submissions of tasks and assignments. There is hope, however, that this can be upended if the teacher constantly encourages students to interact with their peers' work.

Although there are many benefits of providing learning content online, online classes are often met with skepticism. The question of how to involve students successfully in online courses generates more questions than responses. There is a need to find relevant studies on the key topic of students' engagement strategies in online courses and determine which methods work based on empirical studies (Chakraborty, 2017). Students must actively participate for the sake of creating a potent learning environment. Hence, they must reciprocate the learning process by reacting, commenting, and providing feedback on peers' work — leading to student-to-student engagement and not just teacher-to-student engagement in asynchronous learning.

One of the ways that teachers can improve student engagement is through the use of interactive applications like Flipgrid. Flipgrid allows students to interact and engage with each other in ways not possible before, which can, in turn, help increase social presence in online courses. The first specific objective of this research was to analyze the students' previous experiences with other interactive applications. The second specific objective was to determine if Flipgrid interactive options are an intervention for improving students' engagement. Furthermore, the researchers evaluated the effectiveness of Flipgrid interactive options as an intervention for improving students' engagement. In sum, their usage of this app leads to classroom engagement that is being studied in this research.

Literature review

Following the DepEd Order No. 21, s. 2019 and No.12, s. 2020, implementing online learning as the new learning mode has been observed in the academic year 2020-2021. With this, the delivery of lessons is made through two types of classes: synchronous and asynchronous classes. In an asynchronous class, the students will not meet with their teacher. However, the students are still required to complete tasks that will have to be submitted on a specific date, such as assignments, group, and individual works, reflective essays, short video responses, and quizzes to be taken after class. The good thing about asynchronous learning is that students will

have to work at their own time and pace within the confines of their own homes. This is supported by a study conducted by Hoang and Tran (2022), which found that students had a positive attitude about online education as they found it to be beneficial since it provided them with flexibility and convenience. Similarly, Dau (2022) also mentions how teachers and students had opportunities to be exposed to the abundant teaching and learning resources online and how, through asynchronous activities, students could learn at their own pace and time, so they understand the lessons better.

One such tool that aids in online learning is Flipgrid. Flipgrid is a video-based tool that allows conversations and connections across digital devices, but enjoyably and engagingly that makes it ideal for use in education. It is structured to help with group discussions but in a way that doesn't leave any student on the spot. It is very helpful as it allows less socially able students to express their ideas and emotions with their classmates. The ability to re-record responses helps alleviate students' pressure when communicating, making this a very enabling tool for education (Edwards, 2022), especially for language learning, where the pressure to perform is high.

As Edwards (2022) mentions, one of the best things about Flipgrid is the capability to interact using different media like video, such as face-to-face in the real world, but without the pressure of a live classroom. Since students are given the space and time to respond when they're ready, it makes educational engagement possible for even more anxious students who might feel left out in class. The app allows students to add rich media and encourages them to be creative and, potentially more importantly, expressive. Using emoji, text, and stickers, students can participate in class as they might interact with friends using social media platforms. This aspect can help students feel less hesitant and more confident to express themselves openly, engaging more deeply with the task, which ultimately results in deeper understanding and better recalling of lessons and content.

Research conducted by Lowenthal and Moore (2020) states that if students can interact and communicate better with each other, they can develop a stronger sense of social presence and classroom community, which can help them persist and be more successful in their online courses.

Flipgrid has several features and options for students' engagement. One feature would allow students to view and comment (view counts and comment section) on their peers' work (video) posted in the interactive tool under the activity set by the teacher. Pillai (2019) started a study about how one comment can lead to a cascade of comments. The study showed that if one's content has one comment, it is 54% more likely to be followed by another comment. Thus, engagement among students gradually increases like a domino effect. Through these conversations, comment sections lead to the formation of a virtual learning community.

Moreover, Flipgrid allows students to interact and engage with each other in ways not possible before, which can, in turn, help increase social presence in online courses. In addition, Holbeck and Hartman (2018), as cited by Lowenthal and Moore (2020), found Flipgrid to be an effective and relevant educational tool. Furthermore, a study by Delmas and Moore (2019), as cited in

Lowenthal and Moore (2020), explored the use of Flipgrid in undergraduate and graduate classes and students reported that they felt that their feelings of community and connection were made stronger using Flipgrid. They reported that it helped increase students' engagement and communication in a secondary classroom.

Research suggests that instructors can use Flipgrid to support the type of collaboration and engagement they seek in their online courses (Gurjar, 2020; Mejia, 2020; Moore, 2016). Students in their study found Flipgrid to be a valuable tool for promoting social presence through asynchronous video discussions.

Nowadays, students are digitally literate regarding how technological devices work. During synchronous and asynchronous classes, students show how tech-savvy they are in manipulating and navigating their Learning Management System (LMS) and how interactive applications are utilized in the classroom. Students manifest this skill of being digital experts and require no teacher supervision. That said, they are ready to participate in this action research using the intervention that the researchers will propose.

Although there has not been much research done about Flipgrid, this action research will help teachers and students in different institutions by subsequently adapting the proposed intervention. This contribution would be a huge steppingstone to a new era of learning.

Research Objectives

This research is designed to aim the following objectives:

General Objective: To utilize Flipgrid as an interactive application to improve students' engagement in language asynchronous classes.

Specific Objectives:

1. To analyze the previous experiences of the students with other interactive applications;
2. To determine if Flipgrid interactive options are an intervention for improving students' language learning engagement; and
3. To evaluate the students' experiences in using Flipgrid interactive options in asynchronous learning.

Methods

Pedagogical Setting and Participants

The study was conducted in Xavier University Junior High School or XUJHS for the school year 2020-2021 through online asynchronous connections.

Xavier University Junior High School (XUJHS) is a Jesuit school located in Cagayan de Oro, Misamis Oriental- a city from Mindanao, Philippines. From the year 2020 up to the present,

XUJHS was temporarily shut down due to pandemics and COVID-19 health protocols. Thus, the learning was continued using the new method of education — flexible learning/online learning. Currently, XUJHS uses Microsoft Teams (MS Teams) as the school's main learning management system (LMS), where teachers and students communicate and collaborate in learning during synchronous sessions. MS Teams was also the official learning platform for teachers where they post announcements, activities, and assignments for students during asynchronous sessions.

In this action research, the researchers used the purposive sampling method in conducting the study. Purposive sampling can provide reliable and robust data. An English class from the Grade 10 level was chosen to participate in the study. Each section has 20-25 students under the age range of 15 to 17. These students were selected as they were the most suitable respondents for answering the action research's objectives — providing as rich data as possible. The whole class used Flipgrid in their classroom activities. Out of the 25, 20 participated in the pre-test, while only 17 participated in the post-test.

Design of the Study

This paper follows a practical action research design that utilizes a mixture of qualitative and quantitative methods that address the problem of the study. The data collected sought to understand and determine whether the utilization of the interactive application (Flipgrid) and its features (such as comment section and view counts) are the intervention in improving students' engagement in FlexiLearning. The study has utilized three research tools: inventory questionnaire, students' engagement evaluation (known as the pre-and post-test survey questionnaires), and focus group discussion (FGD).

Data collection and analysis

The researchers fully observed ethical procedures in all aspects of the study. Resnik (2020) highlighted the idea that the researchers should follow ethical norms because they promote the goals of the study; knowledge, truth, and avoidance of error. Ethical norms also promote the important values of collaborative work; trust, accountability, mutual respect, and fairness.

The data gathering procedures were all done on an online platform. It was made sure that no class hours were taken and/or conflicted by the researchers in the process. The implementation of the study was all done during asynchronous sessions of the students.

In the first procedure of data gathering, the researchers asked permission from the moderator of the class. The distribution of the consent and assent forms followed. A week was given to the respondents and parents to comply so that they would have ample time to decide whether or not they would participate in the study. The respondents who submitted the consent and assent forms were the only ones who could wholeheartedly participate in the study.

In the second step, the researchers distributed the inventory questionnaire to assess students' knowledge and use of digital tools. Along with the inventory, a questionnaire was a pre-test survey questionnaire. These two survey questionnaires were distributed online using Google

forms with the help of the respondents' moderating teacher. It was made sure that the respondents answered the inventory and pre-test without experiencing the intervention first. When the intervention phase was over, the respondents then answered the post-test students' engagement evaluation survey questionnaire. The inventory questionnaire and pre-and post-test were all floated in the first week.

In the second week of the action research implementation, the researchers conducted a focus group discussion to strengthen the respondents' experiences with the interactive application and its features as an intervention. In conducting FGD, proper preliminaries were observed, and the respondents were assured about the confidentiality of their identities. The questions were asked conversationally so that the respondents would not find the researchers intimidating. Overall, the whole duration of the data gathering procedure lasted two weeks.

The researchers analyzed the students' experiences using Flipgrid interactive options in asynchronous learning by conducting an FGD (Focus Group Discussion). It gave the learners an avenue to answer various questions that encapsulates their experiences while utilizing Flipgrid. And also, the effectiveness of Flipgrid as an intervention for improving students' engagement was calculated through the data gathered in the pre-test and post-test. In analyzing the data gathered, the researchers will utilize T-test (unpaired) inferential statistics to see a significant difference in the pre-test and the post-test results. It is used to determine whether there is a significant difference between the means of the two groups. To interpret the mean scores before and after the intervention, the following scoring guidelines were used:

Table 1.

Interpretation of Score Range

1.00 - 1.74	Not Engaged
1.75 - 2.40	Somewhat Engaged.
2.50 - 3.24	Engaged
3.25 - 4.00	Highly Engaged

Results/Findings and discussion

Specific Objective No. 1: To analyze the previous experiences of the students with other interactive applications.

In gathering the data, the researchers provided an inventory questionnaire to know the learner's prior background regarding what tools they utilized in an online class and whether it helped them be more engaged. A total of 20 students out of 30 took the inventory questionnaire for interactive application. Students were asked about the digital tools they have used in the online classroom, and the results show that 90.5% of the learners responded that they use Microsoft Teams in their online classroom, while 9.5 % answered Flipgrid.

When asked about the learners' feelings about utilizing digital tools to improve their engagement in online learning, 85.7% answered "YES" when asked if they feel digital tools

would help them to be more engaged in online learning, while 14.3% of respondents answered "MAYBE."

When asked what kind of digital tools will help increase their engagement and communication, 66.7% of the respondents answered Flipgrid, 95.2% to Microsoft Teams, 14.3% to Google Classroom, and 4.8% said Edmodo.

Next, learners were asked to rate how comfortable they were with creating a digital portfolio. 28.6% of the learners gave a perfect 10 when asked if they were comfortable creating digital portfolios, 14.3% gave 8 and 9, about 19% responded with 7, 14.3% gave 6, and 9.5% answered 5.

Lastly, learners were asked to rate how comfortable they were in using Flipgrid for online classes. 14.3% of the learners responded 8, 9, and 10 as their ratings when asked if they are comfortable utilizing Flipgrid. 28.6% answered 7, 9.5% - 6, 4.8% - 5 and 14.3% gave 4.

Overall, most of the learners actively answered the inventory questionnaire, which lets the researchers know what digital tools they use in their online learning and whether it motivates them to be more engaged in class. The results show that 90.5% of the learners use Microsoft teams, and 85.7% positively responded: "YES" when asked if the digital tools help them be more engaged in class. 66.7% of the respondents chose Flipgrid as a tool that would enhance their communication skills. When asked about their comfortableness in creating a digital portfolio, 28.6% gave a perfect rating. And only 14.3% of the learners gave an excellent rating of "10" when asked if they are comfortable using Flipgrid. This data will be used to support the study of the effectiveness of Flipgrid in improving students' engagement in asynchronous learning.

Specific Objective no. 2: To determine if Flipgrid interactive options is an intervention for improving students' language learning engagement.

Table 2.

Test of Significant Difference between Pre-test and Post-test scores

	n	M	SD	<i>p</i>
Pre-test	20	2.82	0.432	0.0045
Post-test	17	3.28	0.495	

The pre-test and post-test questionnaires measure the respondent's attitude during asynchronous sessions using Flipgrid. With the data presented above, the overall mean of the pre-test for 20 students is 2.82. It means that most of the students agree on the effectiveness of Flipgrid in enhancing students' engagement. On the other hand, the post-test has an overall mean of 3.28 for 17 students. This means that after the intervention was conducted, students now strongly agree on how effectively Flipgrid boosts their engagement during asynchronous sessions.

To determine the significance level of the data, the researchers calculated the p-value. Hence, the p-value is 0.0045, which means a highly significant difference between the two tests (pre-test and post-test). If the p-value is greater than 0.5, Flipgrid and its features, as the researchers claim to improve students' engagement in asynchronous sessions, will be nullified. The evidence of this significant difference can be seen in both the pre-test and post-test. The results of the pre-test show that they have not yet established a relationship with their peers. Students responded that they have less interaction with their peers during asynchronous sessions. They are passive and just comply with their tasks without going the extra mile to interact with their classmates using the available features in Flipgrid. What (Lowenthal and Moore 2020) claim that if students are able to interact and communicate better with each other, they can then develop a stronger sense of social presence and classroom community, which can help them persist and be more successful in their online courses. In addition, (Lowenthal and Moore 2020) reported that Flipgrid could be utilized in secondary classrooms, as Flipgrid helps increase students' engagement and communication during asynchronous sessions. Furthermore, after implementing the intervention, and based on the information gathered in the post-test, students made a stronger connection with their peers using Flipgrid and its features. Overall, the data presented above pertains to the effectiveness of the intervention that contributed to students' engagement during asynchronous sessions.

Specific Objective no. 3: To evaluate the experiences of the students in using Flipgrid interactive options in asynchronous learning.

The researchers conducted a Focus Group Discussion (FGD) to gather more information and gain an in-depth understanding of using Flipgrid as an interactive application to improve students' engagement in FlexiLearning. Due to the current situation, the FGD was conducted through google meet with 15 participants from the class. When asked about their experiences in Using Flipgrid during English Language Learning, one student replied that Flipgrid was already introduced to them in the previous school year and that it is a fun application because it is an excellent way to know the opinions of their classmates. Another responded that Flipgrid is a fun application because of the features students can add text and background music, while another mentioned that Flipgrid is easy to use, flexible, and fun to participate in class. When asked what the things they do in Flipgrid are, they answered process questions, shared their opinions and ideas, shared information about their assignments, and were encouraged to comment on another's video. Students were also asked about how they feel when they see that their work has a lot of views on Flipgrid and whether this motivates them to view and engage with other students' work as well. One student shared that they feel accomplished and realized they had done something worthwhile, while another said that it is an excellent way to increase motivation and work harder. Students were also asked if getting feedback from their peers helped them to be more engaged in creating videos. To which they answered that they are happy when their classmates watch and leave comments on their videos and that the comment feature allows students to be more united and an avenue to know more about their personalities. Students also mentioned that they would be more encouraged to exchange one's opinions with

those who leave a comment on their videos, and they believe that it would be best if they interact with their peers so that they will be closer with their classmates like never before. When asked about the features that they look into in using applications like Flipgrid and what features did you like the most, students responded that they like the fact that Flipgrid is a user-friendly application. Students can add pictures and emojis and even create thumbnails to attract more viewers. Lastly, when asked whether they see Flipgrid as an effective tool that the teachers can utilize in class, students mentioned that Flipgrid is an effective tool because they are allowed to relay their thoughts. They also admit that they rarely participate during the synchronous session. Thus, Flipgrid can bridge the gap to interact with their peers and teacher. They also mention that Flipgrid can help teachers gain knowledge and understand their students' personalities while affirming that Flipgrid is effective because of its convenience, where learners can access the application through their mobile devices, taking videos and uploading them directly.

These findings confirm the study of Pillai (2019), which mentions that engagement among students gradually increases like a domino effect. Through these conversations, comment sections lead to the formation of a virtual learning community. This also supports the findings of Gurjar (2020), Mejia (2020), and Moore (2016), which suggest that instructors can use Flipgrid as a tool to support the type of collaboration and engagement that they are seeking in their online courses.

Overall, the participants' responses showed that Flipgrid is an interactive application that can improve students' engagement in FlexiLearning. Flipgrid is an effective tool for students to participate in asynchronous sessions by answering processing questions given by the teacher. Through creating videos, students can share their thoughts and ideas and exchange opinions with their classmates. In this way, students will also be able to gain new knowledge or perspective from their classmates. The application's features also affect the overall students' engagement. Furthermore, the participants mentioned that this application is easy to use, flexible and convenient. Overall, Flipgrid is an effective application that teachers can utilize in class to improve students' engagement.

During the focus group discussion (FGD), 15 participants joined the Google Meet, where the discussion was conducted. Overall, the participants agreed that commenting and viewing videos on Flipgrid improves students' engagement in asynchronous learning. In correlation to the preceding statement, Delmas and Moore (2019) explored the use of Flipgrid in undergraduate and graduate classes, and students reported that they felt that their feelings of community and connection were made stronger using Flipgrid. The study conducted by Delmas and Moore will be further elaborated in the information gathered during the focus group discussion. As supported by the participants' response, seeing that the video they posted on Flipgrid has views and comments from their peers, they become more accomplished and motivated to do the same thing (about commenting and viewing). In this way, students mentioned that they could be closer to their classmates, and they become more encouraged to exchange opinions with the person who commented on their video. Furthermore, students emphasized that the comment

feature on Flipgrid allows students to be more united, especially after synchronous classes, and it is an avenue for them to know more about their peers' personalities and thoughts.

The majority of the participants in the focus group discussion shared the same sentiments that they do feel happy that their peers leave comments on their work and that they feel glad that their work is being viewed — leading to a realization that they created something worthwhile, making them want to work harder. Thus, this answers the Flipgrid features such as the comment section and view count as an effective intervention to improve students' engagement in asynchronous learning.

The effectiveness of Flipgrid and the intervention in improving students' engagement was certified by the students in the results of the Focus group discussion (FGD) and survey questionnaire. Students saw how helpful Flipgrid was both in asynchronous and synchronous sessions. Despite this learning setup, they still find Flipgrid as an avenue of learning even without the supervision of their teacher in asynchronous sessions.

With the results, it has been hugely affirmed by the students that it is not only effective during synchronous sessions but also in asynchronous sessions as well. The efficacy of the intervention conducted boosted their self-confidence, strengthened student connectivity, and most especially enhanced their engagement.

Students also highlighted that Flipgrid as an interactive application is student-friendly, very flexible, convenient, and most especially easy-to-use. In correlation with the results shown in the Focus group discussion (FGD), survey questionnaires, students are satisfied with the overall feature that Flipgrid has. In addition, with the use of Flipgrid features such as the comment section and view counts, students are more productive, motivated, accomplished, and confident if these two specific features are utilized in the activities. As seen in the results of the survey questionnaire, both overall means have a huge difference, and the p-value is 0.0045. This means the data is highly significant. Overall, the students' perceived effectiveness of the interactive application was up to their standards. Students are genuinely happy with Flipgrid; they enjoy using it even when used and integrated into the face-to-face sessions in the future. They also recommend Flipgrid for lower batches and visualize the impact of Flipgrid for future use.

Conclusion

Interactions with content, peers, and instructors help online learners become active and more engaged in their courses. In achieving a potent learning environment, student interaction is best paired with high-quality instruction and effective learning outcomes. However, students' engagement in Flipgrid would not be possible without the supervision of teachers. The teacher also plays a vital role in activating students' engagement in asynchronous learning. Hence, giving clear instructions for activities and constant reminders to students are key factors that would encourage students to participate in both synchronous and asynchronous learning. The volume of videos and engagement hours and the favorable survey findings and group discussion

from the research project demonstrate that Flipgrid increases students' engagement in asynchronous learning. As previously mentioned, one of the factors for Flipgrid evaluation was determining its effectiveness in an asynchronous setup.

Upon having a group discussion, learners regard Flipgrid as a fun and effective tool that allows them to freely communicate ideas with their classmates by viewing and leaving comments on their videos. It also motivates them to make an effort in creating their videos as they feel accomplished and have done something worthwhile if it gets many views. They also considered it student friendly as it is easy to navigate and offers a variety of features that learners can explore. Based on their feedback and the survey results, the researchers discovered that using Flipgrid enables them to be more engaged by interacting with their classmates. In addition, the pre-test and post-test findings indicate that learners' perception of whether the Flipgrid is an effective tool for engagement has improved after experiencing it firsthand. The findings imply that Flipgrid is a useful tool that teachers can use in their online classes if they have problems increasing their students' engagement in an asynchronous setting.

From the findings and implications stated above, Flipgrid is a tool that teachers can employ with their online classes to support collaboration and engagement between students. With this, the researchers conclude that Flipgrid is an effective interactive tool that teachers can use to improve students' engagement during asynchronous learning further and recommend its use, especially during online asynchronous learning. As the action research is only limited to one section of Xavier University Junior High School's Grade 10 students currently taking the English subject was only pursued in two weeks during the participants' scheduled asynchronous class in a said subject through the online platform; future researchers are recommended to consider a longer time for study and observation, as well as considering other similar platforms.

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