

# Prioritizing Synchronous Class Time with Loom

by Margaret Diehl

The transition to online learning has been difficult for teachers in every field, but when teaching English, the struggle to maintain output and engagement during synchronous classes has been particularly difficult. As new technologies and programs emerge, it can be frustrating learning new programs and teaching them to students. Since March, I have explored many new technologies, searched teacher forums looking for useful platforms, and more times than not decided to forgo many of these new applications. That's why I'd like to save you some time, and talk to you about one program that is useful and easy to learn: Loom. Teaching English is in transition again as schools begin to reopen, but I think that online learning is here to stay; therefore, becoming familiar with useful technology can only enhance your teaching moving forward.



Loom is a screen sharing program that records your screen, voice, and video simultaneously, and is free for teachers. All you need to do is sign up with your educator email. It's easy to [find out more](#).

Loom has a desktop app you can download, or you can add the Google Chrome extension. Once you have the program, you can start recording your screen, webcam, and audio. When you finish recording, the recording will open in a new tab where you can snip any parts of the video that you do not want. Loom is cloud based, so your videos are automatically saved to your Loom account, and then can be shared directly from Loom.com or downloaded. Loom allows you to organize your library of videos; you can create a folder to share with a student or class. You can add security settings with a password or make them available through only the link.

If you share the video from Loom, students can comment on the video, react, and respond to other comments. If you download the video, you can embed it in your LMS system, upload to YouTube, or send the videos directly to students. The sharing capabilities are one of the best characteristics of Loom.

Using Loom allows language teachers to send input to students before class, supporting the flipped classroom model. By recording input such as grammar lessons, readings, and listening activities, synchronous lessons can be dedicated to output, and students can study content asynchronously. Increasing the amount of language use during synchronous time will allow students to actively engage with the content and increase their language acquisition.

I found Loom to be useful in my teaching approach for many reasons. Loom fosters successful learner independence. Giving students the responsibility to watch videos before synchronous class time encourages students to analyze and self-reflect on their understanding. Students can then use class time to discuss and practice. Students can also increase their digital literacy through Loom. You can create how-to videos for assignment instructions or to teach new tech. This is useful because students can watch the video as many times as needed, and you don't need to spend as much time in class giving instructions.

Another useful way to use Loom is giving student feedback on writing. To do this, I open their writing and use the whiteboard function on my laptop. I record my voice and screen (no webcam) and talk through their work. I leave written comments and spoken comments. This creates more engagement than simply writing feedback through comments, because students must listen, watch, and analyze their writing



Find Maggie Diehl's examples and how-to videos [here](#).

to improve it for the next draft. To see some examples of how I have used Loom in my English classes, scan the QR Code.

There are many possibilities for teachers and students to create content for online classes with Loom. Even

though we are transitioning to hybrid and some schools are returning to in-person learning, I believe online learning is here to stay. Learning a few useful programs can help teachers with their lesson planning time and can help us foster engaging online learning.



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## ELT RESOURCES REVIEW

# Sparking Engagement: Flipgrid

by Rosemary Colón

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Between the spring of 2020 and the present, our classrooms were transformed from a physical space to a new, virtual one. While the initial shock has worn off of seeing students at their desks transition to a digital space, we have adapted with the technological advantages of living in the 21st century. Engaging with such tools has helped bring interaction and engagement into a two-dimensional space. One such indispensable tool that made the transition a rather seamless one was the inclusion of Flipgrid into my ESL classroom.

Flipgrid is a free video platform and app that caters to education and encourages student engagement. In fact, Flipgrid's slogan states that it "sparks engagement." This platform gives teachers a space to post questions or topics through short videos within their own class group. Students respond to those assigned questions or topics with individual video responses which may range from 30-second replies to ten-minute presentations. All of this engagement is achieved using a computer or laptop with a

camera or a smartphone or tablet that have access to the platform's app or website.

From pre-writing topic brainstorming to grammar and conversation practice, you might find multiple uses for Flipgrid in your classroom. For instance, in my classes there is always an introduction topic, even if students are familiar with each other. The introduction topic provides an opportunity for students to not only get comfortable with the platform and recording themselves, but to also be comfortable responding to their classmates' videos. Introductions are a productive means to introduce the tech into your classroom while offering opportunities for practice.

Flipgrid also allows for asynchronous interactions. Students have time to record and

