

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



respond on their own time. Students utilize their voices not only for assignments or topics posted by you, their teacher, they also give feedback and interact with each other. For example, in the context of the introduction topic as previously discussed, students may watch and record a response to a classmate's video according to the topic directions given by the teacher. The students not only respond to the teacher's prompt for the topic, but practice listening and speaking by interacting with their peers' videos. All of these interactions appear on the classroom group in the Flipgrid app.

In addition to sparking student engagement, another essential advantage of Flipgrid is the support available to educators to navigate the platform. Flipgrid is used across K-12 and university levels and the developers seem to recognize this as they have a very active support system with YouTube explainers and respond quickly to questions about the platform. As you encourage student engagement with Flipgrid, I suggest you use it as a tool for you to be engaged as well. In my experience, this platform is a very inviting part of your ESL/EFL classroom.

Moreover, another benefit to using a platform like Flipgrid is the variety of ways I am able to integrate it into lessons. Recording topic instructions or responding to student videos are clear and engaging educator uses of flipgrid,

but feedback is also a fundamental use of the platform. Flipgrid is a constructive medium for formative and summative assessment of student work. You can set up rubrics and space is provided for individual feedback. This is an invaluable tool for a variety of assignments that could range from pronunciation, oral journals, or grammar presentations. Students become more inclined to post their videos once they see their teachers are also responding. In other words, there is student buy-in as Flipgrid becomes one of the course's essential tools.

Language learning requires engagement and interaction. For all of the reasons stated here and more, Flipgrid has aided me in making the transition from a physical classroom to a virtual classroom one that has kept in step with those exact language learning objectives of engagement and interaction. It has also provided me as an educator the support to learn and explore, so that I may continue to spark engagement with my students. I encourage language educators to explore Flipgrid so that it may assist you, too, in sparking engagement and interaction in your virtual classrooms.



Scan this QR code to see Rosemary Colón's presentation on Flipgrid from WAESOL 2020.



Rosemary Colón is an ESL educator. Having attended the MATESOL program at Gonzaga University, she has been able to build on her experience over the last 3 years teaching in university and community settings in the Spokane area where she currently resides after having spent most of her life in the Bay Area, California. Rosemary has also worked with KSPS PBS as an education consultant developing curriculum and facilitating workshops. She is an advocate not only for ELs but for education by taking an interest in policy and advocacy learning how educators can build on their support for their students and communities. She continues to add to her experience and learning through conferences such as WAESOL, collaborating with her peers, and being creative with tech resources like Twitter. You can contact her at colon.rosie@gmail.com.