VELES JOURNAL

Vol. 9, No. 3; December 2025
E-ISSN 2579-7484
Pages 468-483
DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.29408/veles.v9i3.29441

What Works for Learning Pragmatics Online? EFL Students' Views on Flipped, Independent, and Lecture-Based Modalities

[1]Daniel Ginting, *[2]Kartika Nuswantara, [3]Marsha Lavania Manivannan, [3]Hema Rosheny Mustafa, [4]Yusawinnur Barella

[1]Universitas Ma-Chung Malang, Indonesia
[2]Institut Teknologi Sepuluh Nopember, Indonesia
[3]Universitas Teknologi Malaysia
[4]Universitas Tanjung Pura, Indonesia

***Correspondence:**
kartika_nuswantara@its.ac.id

Submission History:
Submitted: July 8, 2025
Revised: August 24, 2025
Accepted: December 17, 2025

Abstract

This study examined students' perceptions of three online modalities for learning pragmatics during a semester marked by expanded remote instruction. Fourteen English majors in one pragmatics course selected a preferred modality and completed the course across sixteen meetings: lecture based online instruction (n = 5), independent study (n = 5), or a flipped classroom (n = 4). Using a descriptive qualitative design, semi structured interviews were conducted after the course and analyzed through thematic analysis. Students in the flipped classroom reported stronger preparation for live sessions, higher confidence to participate, and deeper contextual understanding through discussion, case analysis, and role play. Independent study afforded flexibility, opportunities for reflection, and repeated exposure to instructor videos and texts, but motivation, isolation, and uncertainty without real time dialogue were common. Lecture based online instruction delivered clear structure and concrete examples but limited active engagement. Across modalities, perceived effectiveness hinged on instructional design, including careful management of cognitive load, concise and segmentable pre class materials, and purposeful use of synchronous time for analysis of authentic pragmatic data such as cooperative principles, speech acts, and politeness strategies. The findings suggest that a well-designed flipped model can support online pragmatic learning when students are prepared and materials are accessible, yet no single approach is universally optimal. Limitations include a small, self-selected sample and reliance on self-reported perceptions. Future research should examine long term learning outcomes, the interaction between learner characteristics and design features, and integrated flipped designs that combine strengths of the three modalities.

Keywords: Flipped class, pragmatics, text-based learning, video-based learning

INTRODUCTION

Remote delivery expanded rapidly and shifted attention from tools to design choices and student self-regulation. The pandemic catalyzed an abrupt scale up of technology mediated instruction across higher education, but the variability of outcomes made clear that platforms by themselves do not guar antee meaningful learning (Nussli et al., 2022; Salta et al., 2021). What matters is how instructors sequence activities, make expectations visible, calibrate workload, and sustain interaction and feedback across weeks, not merely whether a video conference platform or a learning management system is present. Course quality in online settings also depends on designs that maintain attention and participation over time through clear goals, purposeful tasks, and timely support, rather than on the novelty of the toolset alone (Konstantinidou & Nisiforou, 2022; Chen et al., 2021; Zimmerman et al., 2020; Dubey et al., 2023). At the same time, distance learning raises the bar for student self-regulation. Without co presence, students must plan study, monitor understanding, and manage motivation more deliberately, which amplifies the role of metacognitive strategies and time management in determining who benefits from online courses (Radović et al., 2024; Binali et al., 2021; Anthonysamy, 2021; Yu, 2023). As universities retain online and hybrid offerings after the pandemic, understanding which design features enable productive engagement becomes a practical necessity. Framed this way, the inquiry shifts from asking whether technology improves learning to identifying which instructional choices and supports help students organize effort, process complex material, and participate actively in online courses.

These design demands are especially acute in domains where understanding hinges on context and interaction, notably pragmatics. Pragmatics concerns how speakers and listeners construct meaning in context, drawing on shared background, social intentions, and situational cues rather than literal word meaning alone (Munir & Yavuz, 2024; Taguchi, 2011; Sánchez-Hernández & Martínez-Flor, 2021). As noted by Taguchi (2014) and Rafiq and Yavuz (2024), teaching this domain online is demanding because successful pragmatic interpretation depends on resources that are thinned or distorted at a distance, such as timing, intonation, gaze, gesture, turn taking, and the ebb and flow of repair in talk. Static or purely asynchronous activities capture propositional content but rarely convey uptake, stance, and the subtle negotiation of face, so learners may miss how the same utterance can function differently across settings and relationships (Bohinski & Mulé, 2016; Delahunty, 2018). Reduced co presence also weakens opportunities to test interpretations in the moment, to read room dynamics, and to adjust wording in response to micro feedback, which are central practices for learning pragmatics (Zadkhast et al., 2023; Wang & Liu, 2019). Cross cultural variation adds further complexity, since norms for directness, mitigation, and deference travel poorly without rich context (O'Dowd, 2021; Al-Seghayer, 2024; Yılmaz & Temizkan, 2022). In light of these constraints, flipped learning emerges as a design solution that reintroduces interaction and context by shifting input to preparation and reserving live time for guided application and feedback.

Flipped learning is positioned as a design solution that pairs independent preparation with interaction rich live sessions. Before class, students engage with instructor created videos and concise readings that are segmented and signposted so learners can pause, replay, and focus on essential elements; these choices aim to reduce extraneous load, calibrate intrinsic load, and support schema building rather than add novelty for its own sake

(Kalyuga, 2011; Kalyuga, 2014; Monaghan-Geernaert, 2019; Isaias, 2018). The preparatory materials foreground core ideas that are then taken up during synchronous time for guided application, including analysis of authentic pragmatic data, case discussion, and role play with immediate feedback to surface and repair misconceptions (Lee & Bonk, 2024; Hazaymeh & Altakhaineh, 2019). In this implementation, the model uses clear pre class objectives, short and segmentable media, and prompts that tie preparation directly to discussion tasks and formative checks. The claim is deliberately modest and design focused: a flipped arrangement can support readiness, participation, and contextual application when pre class workload is calibrated and synchronous work is purposeful and well scaffolded; it is not expected to outperform other modalities in the absence of these conditions (Hsieh et al., 2016; Haghighi et al., 2018; Aghaei et al., 2019).

Across recent work, flipped designs are consistently linked to stronger engagement yet their effects depend on context and implementation quality. A landmark survey characterized the flipped classroom as pre class video with in class active problem solving and noted that most studies relied on single group designs and student perceptions, with students preferring in person lectures for input but interactive activities for class time while objective outcome evidence remained limited (Bishop & Verleger, 2013). Evidence from teacher education shows that reflective practices and technology mediated collaborative learning can build self-directed learning competencies, signaling the importance of preparation and collaboration for online study (Lee & Bonk, 2024). In pragmatics, flipped instruction produced larger gains than conventional teaching for request speech acts, likely due to flexible and accessible preparation that supported practice (Hazaymeh & Altakhaineh, 2019). A PRISMA review reported rapid growth of flipped approaches in language teaching, especially English L2, with frequent gains in motivation and outcomes (Kernagaran & Abdullah, 2022). A broad meta-analysis found positive effects across academic, interpersonal, and satisfaction domains, although effect sizes varied and were most strongly moderated by educational context, reinforcing that design matters more than labels (Bredow et al., 2021). Studies also highlight a critical dependency on pre class engagement, with only small attention advantages for student engaged videos over instructor videos and ongoing concerns about compliance (Koh & Ahn, 2023). Parallel findings show positive attitudes toward video-based flipping in non-English programs, including enjoyment, engagement, and motivation (Oya et al., 2024).

Research on flipped learning in language education is dominated by blended or face to face contexts and general L2 outcomes, leaving fully online pragmatics under examined despite its reliance on context, interaction, and non-verbal cues that are often diminished at a distance. Much of the literature evaluates a single modality in isolation and reports perceptions without a design-oriented account of why a modality seems effective, while comparisons across lecture-based instruction, independent study, and flipped classroom within the same course are rare. Addressing this gap, the study provides a within course comparison in a fully online pragmatics class that holds setting constant and links student perceptions to concrete design features, including segmented pre class media, clear objectives, light formative checks, and interaction focused live sessions. The aim is to clarify how these approaches differentially support comprehension, engagement, and the application of cooperative principles, speech acts, and politeness strategies in distance settings, and to distill which elements of preparation and synchronous interaction students

view as enabling or constraining. Accordingly, the guiding question is, what are student perceptions regarding the effectiveness of various pragmatic learning methods in distance education?

METHOD

This study used a descriptive qualitative approach to elicit students' perceptions of the efficacy of three online learning techniques in a university pragmatics course: lecture-based instruction, independent study, and flipped classroom. A qualitative descriptive design is suited to producing low-inference, practice-near accounts of experience and to capturing how learners describe what worked and why (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Creswell & Poth, 2018). Semi structured interviews explored how students understood and applied pragmatic concepts and how they judged the effectiveness of each approach, balancing consistency across interviews with flexibility to probe individual experiences (Booth, 2016). Interview data were then analyzed thematically to identify patterned meanings related to design features and perceived learning, following established guidance for rigorous thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2021; Nowell et al., 2017).

Participants were fourteen English majors enrolled in the same academic year of the pragmatics course to reduce background variation. Prior to instruction, students selected the modality they preferred, which yielded three groups: lecture based online instruction (n = 5), independent study (n = 5), and flipped classroom (n = 4). Self-selection was retained because the purpose was to understand perceptions within authentic choice contexts rather than to estimate causal effects, which aligns with qualitative descriptive aims (Yadav, 2021; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). All participants received an information sheet outlining the study's purpose, procedures, potential risks and benefits, and data handling. Participation was voluntary, with the right to withdraw at any time without penalty, and confidentiality was preserved through de-identification of data and secure storage. Written informed consent was obtained prior to data collection, consistent with recognized ethical standards for educational research (Caeymaex et al., 2023; Haneef & Agrawal, 2024). Attention to credibility and dependability was supported through clear documentation of procedures and analytic decisions, consistent with qualitative trustworthiness criteria (Kakar et al., 2023; Nowell et al., 2017; Megheirkouni & Moir, 2023).

Fourteen English majors completed a sixteen-week pragmatics course delivered entirely online. At course start, students selected one of three modalities that matched their preference, yielding three groups: lecture-based instruction (n = 5), independent study (n = 5), and flipped classroom (n = 4). Each group experienced a stable set of learning activities aligned to its modality. Lecture based instruction provided weekly synchronous sessions on a video platform in which the instructor delivered structured explanations with concise slides and guided readings; interaction was brief and typically confined to end of session questions. Independent study provided no synchronous meetings; students progressed through short instructor created videos and curated readings at their own pace and completed reflective prompts or short quizzes for monitoring. The flipped classroom combined pre class engagement with videos and readings and synchronous meetings used for discussion, case analysis, and role play to apply pragmatic concepts. Stabilizing these conditions across the semester helped ensure that interview responses reflected the intended design features of each modality (Namey et al., 2021).

After instruction concluded, semi structured interviews were conducted with all participants to elicit perceptions of learning efficacy and lived experience in the assigned modality. Interviews were conducted online via a secure videoconference platform, audio recorded with consent, and transcribed verbatim, consistent with current guidance on remote qualitative data collection (Archibald et al., 2019). The interview guides targeted understanding and application of core pragmatics topics, including cooperative principles, speech acts, and politeness strategies, and probed perceived enablers and constraints in each modality. Items were open ended to support depth while maintaining comparability across participants (Weigold et al., 2021; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

Interview data were analyzed using reflexive thematic analysis to identify patterned meanings about design features and perceived learning across the three modalities (Braun & Clarke, 2021). Coding proceeded iteratively with attention to credibility and dependability through clear documentation of decisions and an audit trail, aligning with qualitative trustworthiness criteria (Lim, 2024). For interpretive clarity, coded excerpts were organized by modality before cross case synthesis, allowing both within group and across group patterns to be examined without losing contextual detail (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

Lecture Based Online Instruction

In the lecture based online instruction modality, students attended weekly synchronous lectures on Zoom where instructors delivered structured explanations with concise slide decks and guided readings that covered core pragmatics topics—Speech Acts (Austin and Searle), Cooperative Principles, and Politeness Strategies (Brown and Levinson). Interaction was limited to a short question and answer segment at the end of each meeting. To stabilize instructional quality, reading packs were capped at ten pages, visually signposted, and paired with reading guides and reflective questions so expectations were clear. Interviews indicated that this format reliably provided a systematic theoretical foundation through clear explanations and concrete examples, yet the low level of live interaction left many students feeling passive and uncertain about practical application. Learners compensated by pre reading, taking notes during lectures, and holding informal peer discussions, and they especially valued real world and cross-cultural illustrations that made social nuance visible. Across accounts, perceptions of effectiveness hinged less on the platform than on interaction design; students consistently wanted more purposeful opportunities during live time to test interpretations, practice analysis, and receive feedback, suggesting that the modality's strengths in organization and clarity would be strengthened by built in, guided application.

The interview echoes these patterns in students owns words. Raka said, "This lecture based online learning method has been quite helpful in understanding the basics of pragmatics, especially since the lecturer explains things clearly and uses relevant examples. However, I feel that my understanding is more theoretical than practical." He added, "The main challenge is the lack of interaction. I often feel passive and unsure whether I truly understand the material. I overcome this by rereading the highlighted text and answering the reflective questions at the end of each section," and noted, "What I found most effective was the professor's explanation of Speech Acts. When he provided direct sentence examples and explained their implicit meanings, I gained a better understanding of how the theory

works in real-world communication." Nabila reflected, "I feel that this method is quite helpful, but not very in-depth. I can follow the flow of the material, but sometimes I feel that I am not challenged enough to think critically," explaining, "The obstacle is boredom from just listening. I overcome this by making my own visual notes from the PowerPoint presentation, so that I am more active," and adding, "The explanation of Cooperative Principles was very helpful.

The instructor explained it using analogies that were easy to understand, such as everyday conversations that violate or follow the principles of cooperation." Dimas observed, "I can understand the basic concepts of pragmatics, but I feel this method doesn't provide enough room for exploration. I know the definitions, but I'm not sure I can apply them yet," continuing, "The biggest challenge is the lack of discussion. I overcome this by having informal discussions with friends after class, discussing the examples given," and noting, "The section on Politeness Strategies was quite interesting. The instructor explained by comparing cultures, and that made me realize that politeness is highly contextual." Intan remarked, "I feel that this method is quite helpful because the lecturer explains clearly and coherently. However, I feel that I only understand the surface, not deeply enough," explaining, "The main challenge is that I quickly lose focus because I am only listening. There are no activities that make me active. I try to overcome this by taking notes of important points while the lecturer is explaining," and adding, "The explanation about Politeness Strategies was quite interesting because the lecturer compared ways of speaking in different cultures. This made me more aware that politeness is highly contextual." Finally, Fajar shared, "I can follow the material well because the lecturer presents it in an easy-to-understand language. However, I feel less engaged because there are no discussions or hands-on exercises," continuing, "My challenge was maintaining concentration throughout the session. I overcame this by reading the material before class, so when the professor explained, I already had an idea," and concluding, "What was most effective for me was when the professor explained Speech Acts using real-life conversation examples. This helped me understand how hidden intentions can emerge in ordinary sentences."

Independent Learning

In the independent learning modality, students progressed through instructor produced videos and curated readings without synchronous meetings, with learning monitored through reflective prompts and short quizzes. Interviews converged on a clear pattern: flexibility and control over pace supported focus and reinforced understanding through rewatchable media, especially for visual and reflective learners; combining concise texts with videos helped students first secure a theoretical frame and then see application. At the same time, the absence of live interaction raised the demands of time management and self-motivation. Several students described drifting or doubting their grasp without discussion partners, turning instead to personal schedules, fixed daily study windows, quiet study spaces, small self-rewards, and occasional use of discussion forums where participation remained low. Some needed to consult additional sources for technical terms, and a few felt that learning moved more slowly without immediate clarification. Overall, independent study fostered ownership and self-regulation and worked well when paired with clear guidance, segmentable media, reflective tasks that connect theory to lived

communication, and light formative checks; its effectiveness varied with learners' prior habits and willingness to structure their own study.

Ayu said, "Independent learning allows me to be more flexible in managing my time, and I feel more focused when reading the material and watching videos. I now understand basic concepts like Speech Acts better because I can rewatch the videos anytime." She added, "The challenge is maintaining consistency in studying. Sometimes I procrastinate because there's no fixed schedule. I overcome this by creating a personal schedule and aiming to complete one topic every two days," and concluded, "What helps the most are the professors' explanatory videos. Their explanations are concise yet clear, and I can immediately relate them to examples in everyday life." Rendi observed, "This method makes me more responsible for my own learning process. I'm more aware of when I truly understand something and when I need to review it," while noting, "The main challenge is the loneliness of studying alone. Without discussion partners, I sometimes doubt my understanding. I try to be active in discussion forums, even though few respond," and emphasizing, "Reflective assignments are very helpful. When asked to connect theory with personal experiences, I better understand how principles of cooperation and politeness emerge in daily communication."

Laila reflected, "I feel this method suits me because I'm a visual learner. Structured videos and texts really help me understand concepts like Politeness Strategies," but also, "The challenge is maintaining focus. Since there's no pressure from a fixed schedule, I have to be really disciplined. I overcome this by studying in a quiet place and setting a fixed study time every day," adding, "The most effective approach is combining text and video. I can read first to grasp the theoretical framework, then watch the video to see how it's applied." Dito remarked, "I've become more independent and can learn at my own pace. But I feel my understanding is slower compared to having direct discussions," and explained, "My challenge is understanding technical terms in the text. Sometimes I have to look up additional references. Fortunately, the professor's videos help explain those terms in simpler language," before noting, "The explanation of Cooperative Principles was very helpful because it included easy-to-understand conversation examples. I can now distinguish between cooperative and non-cooperative conversations." Finally, Sari shared, "I feel more comfortable learning on my own because I can adjust it to my schedule. But I also feel less motivated because there is no direct interaction," continued, "The challenge is maintaining motivation. I overcome it by setting daily goals and giving myself small rewards when I complete tasks," and concluded, "The most effective part is the quiz after the material. It helps me check whether I truly understand or just think I understand."

Flipped classroom

In the flipped classroom modality, students engaged with concise instructor-created videos and curated readings before class to establish foundational understanding, then used synchronous time for guided application through case discussions, role-play simulations, and collaborative problem-solving tied directly to pragmatic topics. Interviews converged on a consistent pattern: pre-class preparation increased readiness, confidence, and the quality of in-class participation, while live sessions provided the interaction and immediate feedback needed to surface misconceptions and connect form to force in authentic communicative scenarios. Students described deeper comprehension when analysis of

examples, cross-cultural contrasts, and real-time questioning were used to bridge theory and practice. The principal challenge was maintaining disciplined pre-class study amid competing demands; several students acknowledged procrastination or finding the initial materials dense, but also reported that scheduled preparation, note-taking, and rewatching segments helped sustain momentum. Overall, the flipped design balanced autonomy with structured interaction, fostering critical thinking and active engagement when pre-class workload was calibrated and synchronous tasks were purposefully scaffolded to require application rather than passive review.

Rina said, "The flipped classroom method has been very helpful in understanding pragmatics because I can learn from videos and texts before class, then discuss them directly with the instructor. I feel more prepared and active during the face-to-face sessions." She added, "The challenge is managing time for self-study before class. Sometimes I'm tempted to procrastinate. But I overcome this by creating a study schedule and noting key points before the discussion session," and concluded, "The most effective aspect is the direct discussion session. When the instructor guides us in analyzing conversation examples, I gain a deeper understanding of how principles of cooperation and politeness are applied in real-life situations." Aldi reflected, "I feel this method makes me more engaged. Studying independently first gives me a foundation, and during class I can ask questions and discuss. This deepens my understanding," noting, "The challenge is ensuring I truly understand the material before class. Sometimes I have to rewatch videos or reread texts. But this actually strengthens my understanding," and emphasizing, "The explanation of Speech Acts was very effective because we were asked to analyze sentences from various contexts. I now understand how hidden meanings can emerge in communication."

Sella shared, "I like this method because it's not just about listening but also actively discussing. I feel more confident because I already have a foundation before class starts," adding, "The challenge is maintaining consistency in self-study. But knowing there will be discussions motivates me to study before class," and, "What was most helpful was when we were asked to compare politeness strategies across different cultures. That discussion broadened my understanding of social context in pragmatics." Finally, Danu observed, "The flipped classroom makes me more active and not just a passive recipient of information. I feel more engaged because I can ask questions and discuss directly with the instructor and peers," while acknowledging, "The challenge is that the initial material can feel dense. But because there are discussion sessions, I can clarify parts I didn't understand," and concluding, "The most effective part is the combination of self-study and discussion. I can directly connect theory with practice."

DISCUSSION

Across the three modalities, the evidence converges on a single point: effectiveness in online learning rests less on the platform than on purposefully engineered interaction and support for self-regulation. As argued by Song and Kim (2020) and Morrison and Jacobsen (2023), outcomes improve when teaching presence is cultivated and course's structure meaningful learner–content, learner–instructor, and learner–learner exchanges while buttressing students' self-regulatory practices. In the same line, Onah et al. (2021), Delen and Liew (2016), and Mamun and Lawrie (2023) recommend designing online courses around interaction–feedback cycles that compensate for reduced co-presence and guide learners to

plan, monitor, and evaluate their work. The implication is clear: design rather than the tool drives engagement and perceived learning—clear explanations and curated readings provide conceptual footholds, but tasks that require application, test interpretations, and deliver timely feedback are what deepen understanding.

The flipped classroom aligned most closely with these conditions when its two halves were tightly coupled: segmentable pre-class materials that made expectations visible and manageable, followed by synchronous sessions that demanded analysis of authentic data, cross-cultural comparison, and role-play with immediate instructor mediation (Baig & Yadegaridehkordi, 2023; Dalbani et al., 2022; Pang, 2022; Izadpanah, 2022). Furthermore, Muhlisoh et al. (2020) and Öztürk and Çakıroğlu (2021) show that concise, well-cued pre-training reduces extraneous load and helps build schemas that can be exercised in subsequent interaction; in line with this, students in the present study reported greater readiness, confidence, and participation when preparation tasks were explicitly tied to live discussions. At the same time, the model's benefits depended on disciplined pre-class study; where preparation slipped, the payoff in live time diminished (Strelan et al., 2020). These contingency echoes broader evidence that flipped formats are not uniformly superior and that their effects hinge on context and design quality (Kurtz et al., 2015; Kapur et al., 2022).

In addition, independent study foregrounded autonomy, allowing learners to regulate pace, replay explanations, and combine concise texts with video in ways that supported visual and reflective preferences (Alrabai, 2021; Kharbanda, 2021; Dewi & Wilany, 2023). That same autonomy, however, heightened the demands of time management and sustained motivation; students described isolation, procrastination, and slower progress when immediate clarification was unavailable. As Sayed et al. (2024) argue, full mastery ultimately rests on the ability to learn independently regardless of delivery mode; in practice, the most effective implementations tempered freedom with light, consistent guardrails—weekly pacing guides, reflective prompts that tether theory to lived communication, and low-stakes quizzes that provide rapid feedback. In short, autonomy needed structure: enough to stabilize momentum without diluting the flexibility students valued (Yang, 2023; Jeon, 2022).

Lecture-based online instruction provided reliable conceptual clarity through well-organized slides and guided readings, yet limited in-session interaction left students feeling passive and uncertain about practical application. MacIntyre et al. (2020) argue that the rapid shift online often occurred under severe time constraints, with administrators and instructors underprepared to redesign teaching, assessment, and workload expectations—conditions that depress opportunities for interaction. Complementing this diagnosis, Bashir et al. (2021) report that constrained peer exchange and waning motivation are recurring obstacles to effective online learning. The pattern here suggests that the lecture format can be strengthened without abandoning its virtues by embedding short "explain–apply" cycles that interleave mini-lectures with micro-analysis of transcripts, rapid polls to surface interpretations, think–pair–share in breakout rooms, and brief, instructor-modeled deconstructions of politeness strategies across cultures—design moves shown to increase participation and conceptual transfer in online and blended contexts (Liu et al., 2023; Snowball, 2014; Tian & Suppasetseree, 2013). Such adjustments convert a one-way broadcast into a sequence of designed encounters in which students must articulate, test, and refine pragmatic judgments.

Because pragmatics imposes high intrinsic cognitive load—linking linguistic form to illocutionary force in context, inferring social intentions, and tracking turn-taking, mitigation, and facework—preparatory materials must be concise and well sequenced to avoid overloading working memory and undermining the value of live participation (Kim & Taguchi, 2015; Zadkhast et al., 2023). At the same time, external evidence cautions against one-size-fits-all claims about flipped formats: Setren et al. (2021) report domain-specific and distributional effects (short-term gains in mathematics but not economics, with widened performance gaps), while Bredow et al. (2021) find positive average effects alongside substantial heterogeneity moderated by context and design. A pragmatic stance therefore follows: match modality to learners' readiness and the task demands of pragmatics, then engineer the chosen design to make cognitive work visible, social, and iterative—calibrate pre-class workload, embed light accountability cues (e.g., checklists, brief quizzes), and use synchronous time for guided practice that elicits stance, uptake, and repair—features students in this study associated with deeper understanding and engagement.

CONCLUSION

Effectiveness in online pragmatics hinges on design rather than tool. Across lecture-based, independent, and flipped formats, students credited clear explanations and curated readings for initial grasp but attributed deeper learning to designs that made cognitive work visible, social, and iterative. Flipped learning yielded the strongest perceptions of readiness and contextual application when concise, signposted pre-class materials fed directly into feedback-rich, interactive sessions. Independent study supported autonomy yet required light guardrails—pacing cues, reflective prompts, and low-stakes checks—to sustain motivation and progress. Lecture-based delivery ensured conceptual clarity but needed brief "explain–apply" cycles to avoid passivity. Given pragmatics' high intrinsic load, preparation must be tightly calibrated and explicitly connected to live practice that elicits stance, uptake, and repair.

Practically, align every pre-class task with an explicit in-class use, keep media short and segmented, embed light accountability to scaffold self-regulation, and reserve synchronous time for guided analysis, case discussion, and role-play with timely instructor mediation. Choose modality to fit learner readiness and logistical constraints—flipped where disciplined preparation is feasible, augmented lecture where real-time scaffolding is needed, and structured independent study where flexibility is paramount but still supported. Limitations include a small, single-course, self-selected sample and reliance on perceptions rather than performance. Future work should use larger, controlled comparisons with validated measures of pragmatic competence, track gains longitudinally, vary segmentation/signaling/feedback cadence, and test how designs interact with learner profiles to improve outcomes without widening gaps.

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