

# “Flipped Class Mode” Applied to Reading and Writing Class With WeChat APP

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With the development of computer, technology way of language teaching has experienced great changes. In the past, the methods of language teaching mainly focus on the direct method, the grammar-translation, audio-lingual, the structure approach, communicative language teaching, community language learning, task-based language learning, etc. These methods start and develop with the need and application of some theories. At the present time, the computer is widely used in every field and the Internet is compulsory of daily life, especially more and more students use the WeChat APP. So the way of teaching language is changing accordingly. This paper is to analyze the new way of language teaching, the flipped class model, and how it is used with WeChat APP. The first part is the general introduction of the flipped class model, the second part is the application of the flipped class model to reading and writing classes, and the third part is the use of WeChat APP in the cell phone.

*Keywords:* flipped class mode, videos, reading and writing classes, WeChat APP

## Introduction

“Flipped Classroom”, “inverted classroom”, or “flipped class model” is to re-modulate the time for in and out of classroom teaching and learning. Traditional classroom teaching is that the teacher teaches and demonstrates and assigns homework in class and the students practice after class either at home or at any spare time. Contrast to the traditional classroom teaching, learning under the flipped model classroom is more a stage of interaction, problems solving, and application of the knowledge of theories. Under the model, the students have more right to decide the study procession, the time assorted to get to know the knowledge, and how long they use time for the assignment given. Under the model, the students may utilize the in-class time more efficiently, targeting at the specific objectives to get deeper understanding of the knowledge.

For the teachers, they do not occupy the in-class time to explain the information, so rather the information or knowledge to be grasped must be learned after class by the students themselves.

The students can watch the videoed lectures, listen to the podcast, read e-books with more functions, and talk with their classmates on line. With these kinds of learning, the students can search for retrieve and information they need.

With this model, the teachers have more time to talk with every student. Flipped model is integral of the whole education movement. It is a kind of hybrid learning, a researching learning. It overlaps with the other teaching methods, for which are all for the students to learn actively and freely and much involve in the class.

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Flipped model is a new method for teaching and learning. With this method, teachers are more like the coach than a saint on the altar. It mixes the indirect explanation and constructive learning.

The points for flipped class model are as the followings: Firstly, it is how to guide the students to watch the videos by themselves; secondly, it is a hard job for the teachers to make many videos; thirdly, it is how to assess the teachers function in class.<sup>1</sup>

### History of Flipped Class Mode Abroad and at Home

In their thesis, Maureen Lage, Glenn Platt, and Michael Treglia first introduced *Inverting the Classroom: A Gateway to Creating an Inclusive Learning Environment* in 2000. They mentioned that they applied the model in the “introduction to economics” and the achievement with the method. But they did not propose the term “flipped teaching” or “flipped learning” (Lage, Platt, & Treglia, 2000).

J. Wesley Bakerg published *The Classroom Flip: Using Web Course Management Tools to Become the Guide by the Side* at 11th International Teaching Conference in 2000.

In 2007, Jonathan Bergmann and Aaron Sams, chemistry teachers in Wood Land Park High School, Colorado, America, began to use the video and PowerPoint appended sound for explanation. He updated the videos to the Internet and the absent students could use it for the lost lessons. And he tried creatively to let the students watch the videos at home and listen to the explanation. With the preparation at home, the teacher mainly answered questions and provided help for the difficult students. The model was gradually utilized in the states. But at the same time, it aroused some argument and questions.<sup>2</sup>

At home, some teachers have tried the new method—flipped model and it was honored the efficient classroom. Both in the higher education and in the senior or high education, even in the elementary education the educators attempt the new model. One of the top higher universities in China has several courses taken in this form. In high schools, the present model was realized in the combination of guide learning and the textbooks and the exercise books.<sup>3</sup>

### The Characteristic of Flipped Class Mode

At the age of Internet, students learn more through the Internet courses. It is the advanced technology that initiates the flipped classroom model. It is completely subversion to the traditional classroom based on the printing, which rouses teachers’ roles, curriculum models, management models, and other changes. Beginning in the United States, “flipping class model” is a teaching organization based on information technology. It subverts the traditional classroom to teach students, focusing on students to construct knowledge and active classroom discussion and teacher’s role as a guide and helper. It is in line with the view of college students’ autonomous learning and cooperative learning; it also reflects the multiple roles of teachers, through improved interpersonal and collaborative activities between teachers and students in teaching activities by video teaching. The following are the clear features of flipped class model.

(1) The teaching videos are short. A common characteristic of the flipped class model is that short. Most of the videos are only a few minutes. Long videos are only more than 10 minutes. Each video is focused on a

<sup>1</sup> See [http://education.news.cn/2014-04/14/c\\_126386097\\_3.htm](http://education.news.cn/2014-04/14/c_126386097_3.htm).

<sup>2</sup> See [http://baike.baidu.com/link?url=HGq1z0vwbV3Q83qpM3FXSGWiFcLs\\_702UB0FNnNRZwYv8ZNAj2w-OD\\_dzYyuH8c2bl\\_4C6EaomtSou\\_sAO8vga#reference-\[1\]-8194867-wrap](http://baike.baidu.com/link?url=HGq1z0vwbV3Q83qpM3FXSGWiFcLs_702UB0FNnNRZwYv8ZNAj2w-OD_dzYyuH8c2bl_4C6EaomtSou_sAO8vga#reference-[1]-8194867-wrap).

<sup>3</sup> See <http://www.zhihu.com/question/20777604>.

specific issue, better targeted, and easily accessible. The length of the video controls within the students’ attention, in line with the characteristics of students’ mental and physical development through webcast video, with multiple functions such as pause, playback, and self-control, helping students study independently;

(2) The teaching videos are conveying concise information. In the flipped class model, the students are attracted by the knowledge or information in the videos. The whole screen is about the information concerned, only with the explanation. It is just like a piece of paper placed in front of the student with a correspond explanation. On the screen there is no teacher’s image and no array of the classroom which may detract the student’s attention, especially in the self-controlled background;

(3) Reconstruction of the study process. Usually the study process is composed of two parts: The first one is that the information transfers from the teacher to the students in class and the second one is that the students absorb the knowledge and digest what is taught. The second phase is done after class at home. Because of the lack of the teachers’ help after class, the students sometimes feel frustrated with the homework and possibly lose the motivation for study. But with the flipped class model, the process was reconstructed. The transfer of the information is finished before class. The teacher not only provides the videos but also is accessible for the students on line. The teachers know the students’ difficulties beforehand and thus efficiently help students in class discussion afterwards. It is a useful pre-class input and successful in-class discussion and communication;

(4) The convenience and swiftness of reviews and tests. After watching the videos, the students have several questions for quiz, which helps the students’ understanding. If the questions are found difficult to answer, they may watch the videos over again. The other advantage of the videos is to help the students to review and strengthen the knowledge provided.

### **The Lynchpin of Flipped Class Mode in China**

The flipped class model is to be used in China and promote a Chinese curriculum and deeper teaching reform. But there are some key points to be guarded in flipped class model. The first one is to set the confidence for the educational reform. The flipped class model is to change the model in the fixed way. The second one is that the teacher has more advanced technology in the computer. The more knowledge about computer is needed. The third one is how to make the videos. And the more important is how to control the time in class. The most important is how to make the flipped class model more successful—the students understand the information, discuss actively in class, and absorb thoroughly. The fourth one is the role exchange. The teacher’s traditional controlling role turns to director and the student’s role becomes more outstanding. They should be more active in class. The parents’ role change urges them to accept the new study model.

### **The Application of WeChat in the Flipped Class Video**

The WeChat App is widely used by the young students and they are interested in the WeChat for reading. Nowadays, the college students are hardly separate with cellphones. They take it anywhere they go, so the WeChat combining the flipped videos will be convenient for the students to learn the language and know the text at any time available. This method, on the one hand, provides the pictures with the explanation; on the other hand, it provides the sound of language teaching, so it makes a vivid mimic classroom atmosphere.

### **The Important Elements in the Reading and Writing Classes**

The reading and writing classes are the basic courses in the language teaching. As language learning there

can be the language outside of the classroom acquisition and in-class learning. From the very beginning of the language learning, listening and speaking are the first steps of learning and reading and writing just follow the listening and speaking. Usually in the stages of reading and writing, students have grasped certain numbers of words and have the ability to communicate. At this stage, the students can modulate the language learning time and model. The flipped video can be sent to the students' WeChat, so the students can manage their time to preview and review the contents of reading and writing.

### **How the Flipped Video is Made and Used**

The reading and writing classes are the basic classes for English learners. As the reasons mentioned above, PPT are widely used in classroom teaching; for the topic in this paper, the writer chose the text “Time Conscious Americans” as an example. Totally there are 34 pages of PPT.

- (1) Be familiar with the idiom with time;
- (2) Grasp the words and phrases in the unit and try to learn as many as possible words concerning with time;
- (3) Know the structure of the unit and try to follow the example to write a composite focus on the main idea;
- (4) To extend the understanding of the practice differences.

These are the ideas were covered in the PPT. In the way of flipped class, the PPT is not presented to the students solely, but with sounds. That is the flipped class.

After the PPT is made, the next step is to record the PPT content or to explain the PPT. The explanation is like the lecture in class, only without the students' communication. The explanation takes 24 minutes.

The third step is to combine the content of PPT and the explanations to form the flipped video—the pictures and the explanation. And after the video is done, it will be sent to the students for previewing the text.

### **The Three Steps for Flipped Class Model Class With WeChat APP**

As the flipped class model, there are three major steps:

(1) To create video for the class. While making the flipped class videos, the students' WeChat APP application backgrounds and ideas should be considered. The students know what is to cover in class and they may grasp the main idea before class. The content of the class includes both the written work and the oral work. Both the idea of grammar, structure and writing technique and the explanation of the ideas are just like that a teacher is behind the screen of the cell phone to give a lecture;

(2) The in-class organization is even important for the success for the whole class when the flipped video is read and learned before class. At this model of teaching, the students have prepared the text and what the teacher will talk about in class. So the in-class organization is more important for checking the students' preparation. In the traditional classes, the teachers explain the text in class, but with the flipped class video, the students know the outline of the text, read, and listening content of the text and learn the exact of the text. At this point, the class organization needs the teacher to prepare more questions for the understanding of the text and the students need more time to practice in class to show the real understanding of the knowledge and the grasp of language. In this way, the flipped class model in the in-class time will be used more efficiently and require both the teachers and students to get fully prepared for the in-class activities.

(3) The after-class strength and assessment of the class. The students’ feedback and assessment are very important for the class.

### **The Difficulty of the Flipped Video**

Generally speaking, it is very efficient for the students to preview the class content to get ready for the class and it seems easier for the teachers to manage the class, but actually it is much work for the teachers to get the flipped video ready. The recording is like a speech without audiences. The record of PPT is not the reading of content of PPT, otherwise it would be dull and the students will lose interests. So the recording is just like classroom lecture. And after recording of the text, the second difficult point is to put the PPT and the recording together to form the video in the form of MP4. For the students, they should set certain period of time for the video although the time can be earlier or later. And the students should value their understanding of the video, not just read it or listen to it. And most important for the students is to ensure that everyone has listened to it and get ready for class, otherwise those who have not prepared will get lost in class. And the most difficult point is that while the video is made, teachers cannot communicate with the students and the student cannot raise questions directly and get answers promptly which need the student to note down the questions and get answers in class.

### **The Feedback of the Videos Class Model**

After the class, the students are organized to talk about their videos learning before class and their practice in class. The students are satisfied with the experiences of watching videos before class and try to learn the ideas mentioned in the video. They can watch the video for one time and they can listen to it for the second or third times for further understanding. The video shows every details of the text explanation to form the objectives, the lead-in, the words and expressions, the sentences patters, the structure of the text, and the writing patter of the text. At the end of the video, the summary is even important for students to grasp the text. Every aspect is covered in the video. The comprehensive understanding is packed in one video for the students. They share their learning funs before class and are glad to perform in class. They are looking forward to having more this kind of practices. They use the cellphone for learning language.

### **Conclusion**

With the experiences of flipped class model, the reading and writing course is successful. The fact proves that the new method is efficient in the classroom language teaching. On the one hand, the students are active in learning with the new technological method, which helps the students to learn by themselves before class. On the other hand, this method saves a lot of in-class time, so the students have more time to practice with the classmates to share their learning experience with the peers. And more importantly, this method improves the teaching and learning efficacy. In the era of Internet, the WeChat can be easily accepted by the young students. The learning resources are more accessible for the students and any learners. Take the text *Time Conscious American* as an example: At the end of more times of listening of the video, the students may summarize the text or use their own words to express the text as “Time is very precious to Americans. Many foreigners have the impression that everyone in the U.S. is likely to be in a rush and under pressure. They are always in a hurry when they walk, eat, or do some shopping. They do not like smiles, short conversations, and small exchanges with strangers, since they consider these to be a waste of time. Leisurely business chats, which are quite

common in some other countries, do not exist here, because Americans start talking business very quickly. Consequently, many labor-saving devices are produced in order to save more time. Teleconference is a good way to settle problems without face-to-face conversation. It is taken a sign of skillfulness to solve a problem quickly”. In the long run, the flipped class could be the prior period for the flipped learning, which will be the widely used in the fragmented learning, Internet learning epic (WANG, 2015).

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