

A Study of the Flipped Classroom Model in Teaching Practical Writing*

Wei Tao

School of Foreign Languages
China University of Geosciences (Wuhan)
Wuhan, China 430074

Jin Yan

School of Foreign Languages
China University of Geosciences (Wuhan)
Wuhan, China 430074

Abstract—"Flipped classroom" refers to a teaching model in which students use the learning materials provided by teachers to learn courses independently before class, discuss and interact with peers and teachers in class and complete exercises. "Flipped classroom" enables teachers to impart knowledge before class, and students have more time to think, communicate and discuss in class so as to complete the internalization and output of knowledge. Practical writing is a course that emphasizes language output and requires students to pay attention to diction, building of sentences and organizing of paragraphs according to the knowledge they have learned. Such courses require feedback from students and correction from teachers simultaneously. Through the model of "flipped classroom", students revise their compositions on site while the teacher is walking around the classroom to answer students' questions and giving them the feedback. Feedback and correction occur at the same time, which can effectively improve students' writing ability. Based on the mini-videos and flipped classroom model, this paper takes the practical writing teaching as an example to elaborate the specific teaching process, aiming to reform the teaching of college English practical writing and provide guidance and reference for the coming relevant research and practice.

Keywords—the flipped classroom; college English; practical writing teaching

I. INTRODUCTION

Flipped classroom started in 2007 when two chemistry teachers at rocky mountain park high school in Colorado, US, and was tried in a chemistry class. They recorded the teaching videos for students to watch at home. The original intention was to help students who were absent from class, but they gradually found that this way of "students learning by themselves at home and solving problems in class" had a positive impact on teaching, and students also liked it. Thus, two chemistry teachers began to think about how to carry out this kind of flipped teaching in class. In 2011, Salman Khan and the Khan academy he founded introduced the flipped classroom to the world.

"Flipped Classroom" is a teaching form that students use learning materials provided by teachers to learn courses

independently before class, and participate in interactive activities of peers and teachers and complete the exercises in class. This teaching model enables students to learn courses at their own pace. After completing a unit of study, students can test their mastery degree through some ways. At the same time, what the teacher explains in class is the content that the students do not understand when they learn independently. This kind of targeted explanation can effectively promote the development of students.

The research on flipped classroom is becoming more and more mature in European and American countries. For example, Jon Bergman and Aaron Sams elaborated the theoretical background, teaching philosophy and implementation method of flipped classroom. Stanford University and Massachusetts institute of technology also carried out empirical researches on flipped classroom. Domestic attention to flipped classroom is also growing. Chunxia Wang applied flipped classroom to college English writing teaching, and found that flipped classroom was conducive to improving teaching efficiency, optimizing teaching effect, activating classroom atmosphere and stimulating learning motivation [1]. Xinqi Yi focused on the importance of peer review in flipped classroom teaching of business English writing, and found that peer review made students pay more attention to their own shortcomings so as to make timely modifications to fully internalize business communication skills and language knowledge [12]. There are few empirical studies of flipped classroom in China, let alone a more systematic teaching system. In order to develop from the practice and exploration of a few researchers into an innovative teaching theory in an information-based environment, flipped classroom should be provided with instructional design model to transform traditional classroom and obtain better teaching effect [10].

II. THE ADVANTAGES OF FLIPPED CLASSROOM IN PRACTICAL WRITING TEACHING

English practical writing is a kind of language output course, which requires students to make phrases, sentences and paragraphs according to the knowledge and skills they have learned. [5] It is highly practical, and this course requires students' feedback and teachers' correction simultaneously. In the traditional classroom model, reviewing the composition is always a headache for teachers.

*Funds: This work was supported by the China Scholarship Council under Grant [(2018)7753] and the Teaching Research Project of China University of Geosciences under Grant [(2018)A52].

As for the mistakes in the exercises, the teacher is difficult to express the revision opinions incisively on the manuscript papers, and even if expressed, students are difficult to fully understand the teacher's correction opinions. [4] Therefore, feedback and correction cannot happen simultaneously and the effectiveness of essay review is very low. In the model of "flipped classroom", students edit short letters on site, and the teacher inspects the classroom, correcting the students' mistakes. Feedback and correction occur simultaneously in a personalized way, which can effectively improve students' writing level. [3]

III. THE APPLICATION OF FLIPPED CLASSROOM TEACHING MODEL IN PRACTICAL WRITING TEACHING

The construction of flipped classroom teaching model in teaching practical writing is divided into three stages: pre-class, in-class and after-class (see "Fig. 1"). Flipped classroom teaching model is different from the traditional teaching model in that the knowledge transfer process focuses on the pre-class stage where the teacher mainly makes relevant videos and multimedia courseware and the main task of students is to learn relevant materials released by the teacher. In the in-class stage, students internalize knowledge and have group discussions which are followed and guided by teachers. Students solidify their knowledge in the after-class stage where the teacher is responsible for reviewing the work completed by the students, and the students modify their drafts for two or more times.

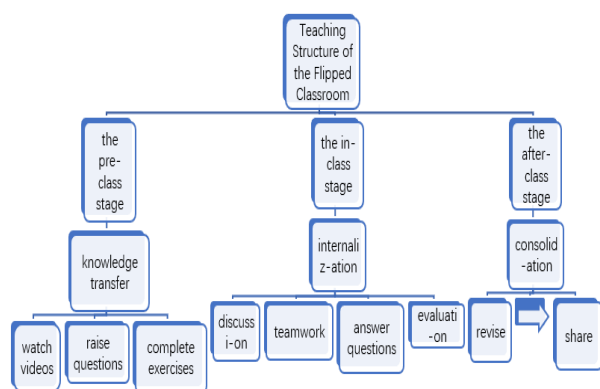


Fig. 1. Teaching structure.

A. The Pre-class Stage

The teacher will send an 8-minute mini video and the corresponding PPT to the Wechat group or the QQ group one week in advance. Mini video is divided into four parts, that is, format, sample composition appreciation, frequently-used phrases and sentence patterns, and related exercises as well. Students can watch the video repeatedly (see "Table I"), making clear the writing norms, expression of ideas and language use of practical writing, independently recording the difficulties they have encountered in the learning process, and completing the first draft of exercises. Inquiry letter writing will be taken as an example. The mini video introduces that the main purpose of the inquiry letter is to seek the required information, which usually includes the

following contents: first the writing intention is indicated; then some specific questions are asked; finally the eagerness to get information is shown and the gratitude is expressed. [2] Assignment one: You and your family are planning for a trip to Hong Kong during the May holiday. Please write a letter to a travel agency to explain your travel plans, ask for relevant information, and express your gratitude for a reply. Assignment two: The New Year's holiday is coming soon and you wish to reserve a room in a hotel in advance so that you and your family can spend your holiday there. Please write a letter to the hotel and ask about the information you need.

TABLE I. PRE-CLASS LIST OF LEARNING TASKS

Learning Tasks	Requirements	Objectives
Task one: watch the mini-video	Step one: familiarize oneself with the structure of writing an inquiry letter and the frequently-used sentence patterns	Guide students to make clear learning objectives
Task two: summarize key points in the video	Take notes	Develop students' abilities of integrating information
Task three: discuss the difficult points in the video with classmates	Report difficult points to the monitor who will help collect questions	Guide students to do the self-study
Task four: finish the assignments	Finish assignments within the given time	Check the students' mastery level

B. The In-class Stage

In the classroom, teachers conduct teaching through such links as problem lead-in, task presentation, task evaluation and task summary. In order to test the students' learning effect before class, the teacher will ask students some questions such as what the basic structure of the inquiry letter is and what the frequently-used sentence patterns in the letter are. [7] If the students have mastered well, the teacher can move on to the next section. If the situation is not ideal, the teacher will play the video again in class and lead the students to review the key points and difficulties in the learning of the inquiry letter. During the task presentation and evaluation sections, the teacher require the two groups of students to present the first drafts of their exercises with PPT in front of the whole class, asking the group members to make self-evaluation on their own works and the other groups to make comments on the group's works. In the task summary section, teachers and students summarize and review the frequently-used sentence patterns in the inquiry letter to consolidate their use. In the in-class stage, self-assessment among students can help students understand and avoid common problems in their writings, and master the writing steps and common expressions of inquiry letters. In this stage, teachers and students should also grade the presentation of the group because the implementation of this evaluation strategy is conducive to improving students' enthusiasm for participation. [6]

C. The After-class Stage

The after-class evaluation is mainly the stage in which teachers review students' first drafts and students modify their own exercises. Teachers should review students' exercises in detail, judging their content relevance, sentence coherence and other aspects, and marking them with detailed notes so that students can get referential modification strategies. Students should carefully revise the exercises reviewed by teachers and independently write the second or third drafts. [8] Students learn English writing methods and skills from teachers' comments, and communicate with teachers and peers online through the communication software, displaying their own exercises and sharing their views on English writing so that English writing knowledge can be truly internalized. [9]

IV. CONCLUSION

As a brand new personalized teaching model, flipped classroom teaching model aims to improve students' abilities of inquiry learning through independent learning, rather than merely mastering more knowledge. From the perspective of teaching process, the flipped classroom teaching model flips the teaching process of teachers, constructing a new teaching process of "knowledge imparting before class and knowledge internalization in class". Students perceive, criticize, reconstruct and create the teaching content as "masters", and the essence of learning is reversed. [11] "Information transfer" is carried out by students before class and teachers provide videos and relevant courseware. "Absorption and internalization" is completed through interaction in class. Teachers can understand the learning difficulties of students in advance, giving effective guidance in class, and the mutual communication between students is more conducive to the absorption and internalization of students' knowledge. Applying the "flipped classroom" teaching model to college English practical writing teaching can improve the phenomenon of low teaching efficiency in practical writing teaching. Students' learning autonomy has been enhanced, and their critical ability has also been improved, laying a good foundation for further study in writing.

REFERENCES

- [1] Chun X. Wang. "The application of flipped classroom in college English writing teaching", *Journal of Changchun Normal University*, vol.9, pp.173-175, 2014.
- [2] David D. Qian and Ming W. Pan. "Politeness in business communication: investigating English modal sequences in Chinese learners' letter writing", *RELC Journal*, vol.42, pp.1-17, 2017.
- [3] F. Kathleen. "Upside down and inside out: flip your classroom to improve student learning", *Learning and Leading with Technology*, vol.6, pp.12-17, 2012.
- [4] J. Bergmann and A. Sams. "Flip your classroom: reach every student in every class every day", Washington, DC: International Society for Technology in Education, pp.21-37, 2012.
- [5] J. Gnanaseelan. "The taxonomy of the functional and structural uses of adverbs in business letter writing in English", *International Journal of Applied Linguistics & English Literature*, vol.5, pp.39-48, 2016.
- [6] L. Deslauriers, E. Schelew and C. Wieman. "Improved learning in a large-enrollment physics class", *Science*, vol.332, pp.862-864, 2011.

- [7] Mazur E. "Peer instruction: a user's manual", NJ: Prentice Hall, pp.23-24, 1997.
- [8] Ming H. Wang. "The construction of flipped classroom teaching mode on college English writing", *Journal of Inner Mongolia University of Finance and Economics*, vol.16, pp.117-119, 2018.
- [9] Qi Dong. "Flipped classroom-a revolution to liberate students' learning ability", *Journal of the Chinese Society of Education*, vol.10, pp.106, 2014.
- [10] Xiao D. Li and Hong H. Cao. "Research on flipped classroom based on micro-lecture-a case study in college English teaching through videos", *Modern Educational Technology*, vol.25, pp.70-76, 2015.
- [11] Xing L. Xu. "What does 'flipped classroom' flip?", *Contemporary Education Sciences*, vol.16, pp.34-35, 2014.
- [12] Xin Q. Yi. "The application of peer review in business English writing teaching under flipped classroom model", *Education Modernization*, vol.12, pp.142-143, 2015.
- [13] Zhe N. Guo. "What can't be flipped in a flipped classroom?", *Teaching & Administration*, vol.9, pp.35-36, 2014.