The attached seminar paper proposal, by Fang Li entitled “Research on the Effect of Flipped Learning Approach on EFL Learners’ Performance on Learning EFL Output Courses,” when completed, is to be submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the University of Wisconsin-Platteville in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Science in Education degree, for which 3 credits shall be allowed, is hereby:

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Paper Advisor
Research on the Effect of Flipped Learning Approach on EFL Learners' Performance on Learning EFL Output Courses

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Abstract

With the rapid advancement of IT, more and more attempts have been made to incorporate this modern technology into education. Of the newest teaching and learning devices and approaches, the use of micro-lectures and the idea of flipped classroom model have caught the attention of many educators and researchers. It has been widely recognized as an innovative and effective instructional approach. Its essence is autonomous learning, whose effect is determined by students’ own motivation, and it is a reform that brings a certain impact on the classroom teaching.

In the paper, the author did a series of literature reviews on EFL flipped classroom learning approach and its application in college EFL teaching and learning, focusing on analyzing the effect of flipped learning approach on college EFL learners’ performance on EFL output courses, aiming to explore its theoretical and practical significance on the effectiveness of promoting college EFL learners’ performance on English learning, with the focus on EFL output courses. Besides, the literature review paper can also provide some references for college EFL educators on their EFL teaching to a certain extent.

Key words: learning performance; flipped classroom learning; literature review; EFL output courses
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Introduction

There is an intricate relationship between EFL learners’ language performance and their language learning approaches, for effective learning approaches, as we know, are of great significance to learning EFL courses. Among those approaches, flipped classroom learning has been widely recognized as an innovative and effective instructional approach by language educators and researchers.

Flipped classroom learning is basically a pedagogical model which reverses classroom activities. Materials or contents are provided online and learners will study the material prior coming to class. Therefore, classroom time can be used to engage in activities such as problem solving, discussion and analysis. Since flipped classroom is a great reform in education, bringing a huge positive impact on the college EFL classroom teaching with the essence of learners’ autonomous learning, it is urgent to bring it into full play and authentically stimulates their motivation of learning English as a foreign language.

Statement of the Problem

The questions and problems include “why the transforming teaching mode always fails in Chinese EFL teaching circumstance, how to implement EFL teaching with flipped classroom approach effectively, especially on teaching and learning English output courses, and how to promote EFL learners’ language performance on learning English courses with flipped classroom approach”.

In certain circumstance, since positive language learning performance of EFL learners and effective EFL teaching strategies are common puzzles for most EFL teachers, this study will
explore these points.

**Definition of Terms**

1. Flipped classroom

   “Flipped classroom overthrows the direct teaching in traditional courses and focuses on leading students to apply knowledge and to achieve higher level learning objectives.” (Gwo-Jen, Chiu-Lin, & Siang-Yi, 2015) “Flipped classroom is especially important for students as they can learn to be more active and be more responsible for their own learning by studying the lesson topic before lessons.” (Chi & Ruby, 2017)

2. Online community-based flipped learning

   “It includes social networking site and educational videos, and the related mobile technologies can facilitate students to engage in-class and out-of-class activities.” (Chi-Jen & Gwo-Jen, 2018)

3. CLT

   “The main focus of communicative language teaching method is to help the students to learn a language so that they can use it to communicate meaningfully in any real life situation. The communicative approach makes teachers and students consider language in terms of the communicative functions it performs in real situations, as well as its structures.” (Ansarey, 2012)

4. PBL

   “Flipped-PBL learning including ‘issue-quest learning, knowledge construction tools, application software or supplementary materials for extension courses, problem-based learning, individual project-based learning, collaborative project-based learning and knowledge sharing, and peer assessment and competition’, which provide some relevant practical teaching strategies
and ideas on improving college EFL flipped classroom teaching and learning with PBL method.” (Gwo-Jen, Chiu-Lin, & Siang-Yi, 2015) It is a learning activity that aims to complete a project product, which can be either collaborative or individual.

5. ANCOVA

“ANCOVA means analysis of covariance which is a general linear model blending ANOVA and regression.” (Chi-Jen, Gwo-Jen, Qing-Ke, & Jing-Fang, 2018)

6. Critical thinking

“It is a cognitive process which involves the understanding of problems and ideas, drawing conclusions, and proposing solutions as a result of analysis and judgment.” (Gwo-Jen, Chiu-Lin, & Siang-Yi, 2015)

Purpose of the Study

Based upon the Chinese education circumstance, exploring more effective and suitable EFL teaching and learning strategies is vitally important for all the EFL educators, and some aspects are needed to be fully considered in our flipped classroom teaching and research procedures in order to improve EFL learners’ language abilities as well as their learning performance on English courses, especially in English output courses.

Significance of the Study

Effective designing and implementing motivational strategies for the flipped classroom teaching, to a certain extent, will enhance learners’ motivation and strengthen the effectiveness of their autonomous learning performance, which will greatly improve their language proficiency, critical thinking abilities, cooperative skills, creativity and language attitudes towards EFL
output courses including English speaking and writing courses.

**Delimitation of the Study**

There are certain existing issues in teaching EFL courses in China including limited practice time, diffidence in study, typical large-scale class, single and routine assessment, and ineffective learning and teaching methods. These issues need to be taken into full consideration.

**Methodology**

A library research seminar paper is available. A literature review of flipped classroom approach in teaching and learning EFL output courses will be implemented.

Here are some issues of conducting this library research seminar paper.

1. The effective implementation of EFL teaching with flipped classroom approach effectively, especially on teaching and learning English output courses.
2. The effective way to promote EFL learners’ language performance on learning English courses with flipped classroom approach
   1) Review on Flipped learning model on EFL learners’ total English learning performance on English courses
   2) Review on Flipped learning model on EFL learners’ oral-performance on English speaking courses
   3) Review on Flipped learning model on EFL learners’ written-performance on English writing courses
   4) Review on EFL learners’ English learning performance on learning English with effective learning strategy
5) Summary

**Review of Literature**

Several issues are thought to be correlated with the effect of EFL flipped classroom teaching, including appropriate assessment criteria of EFL teaching, effective English learning environment, proper application software or supplementary materials, etc (Chi & Ruby, 2017; Gwo-Jen, Chiu-Lin, & Siang-Yi, 2015; Hsiu-Ling & Chiung-Yun, 2017). There are some typical characteristics of EFL teaching in Chinese colleges, such as large-scale classes and fixed textbooks with some unimaginative and profound materials, thus the research on exploring efficient teaching methods and reasonable arrangement and evaluation on each in-class and after-class activity in EFL flipped classroom teaching are of great significance. The following literature reviews attempt to probe into the effective ways of implementing the teaching methodology of flipped classroom in EFL teaching.

**1. Flipped Learning Model on EFL Learners’ Total English Learning Performance on English Courses**

In the research article written by Gwo-Jen, Chiu-Lin and Siang-Yi (2015), they discussed the challenges, definition, characteristics and educational objectives of flipped classroom, and proposed a relevant seamless flipped learning model by integrating the typical features of mobile and wireless communication technologies into it, which could provide a guide for researchers and educators to develop more effective flipped teaching and learning activities and plans for students to learn English seamlessly across at-home and at-school contexts. They found that engaging students in seamless flipped learning, which emphasized self-regulated and across-context learning to foster the higher order thinking competences of students, would
eventually be widely accepted. In reality, it was necessary to value the importance of seamless flipped learning and start investigating those relevant issues.

Gwo-Jen, Chiu-Lin and Siang-Yi (2015) also put forward a series of principles and strategies for seamless flipped-PBL learning including “issue-quest learning, knowledge construction tools, application software or supplementary materials for extension courses, problem-based learning, individual project-based learning, collaborative project-based learning and knowledge sharing, and peer assessment and competition”, which provide some relevant practical teaching strategies and ideas on improving college EFL flipped classroom teaching and learning with PBL method.

Here are some of their finding. “The concept of education has greatly changed from teacher-centered instruction to diverse learner-centered learning modes. Flipped Learning, which focuses on the use of effective learning methods to engage students in more practice, interactions and attitudes in the classroom.”

“Flipped classroom overthrows the direct teaching in traditional courses and focuses on leading students to apply knowledge and to achieve higher level learning objectives.” (Gwo-Jen, Chiu-Lin, & Siang-Yi, 2015)

From the above research finding, we can see that flipped learning model with mobile and wireless communication technologies can improve EFL learners’ English output performance on learning English output course to a certain extent.

2. Flipped Learning Model on EFL Learners’ Oral-Performance on English Speaking courses

Some researches focus on improving specific English teaching effect with flipped classroom approach (Chi-Jen & Gwo-Jen, 2018; Chi-Jen, Gwo-Jen, Qing-Ke, & Jing-Fang, 2018; Wen-Chi,
Scott, & Jie, 2017). In the research article, Chi-Jen and Gwo-Jen (2018) focused on English oral-performance and participation between high improvers and low improvers, and the relevant t-test result showed that the online community-based flipped learning approach using mobile technologies was effective in the English-speaking classroom and students’ interactive behaviors and their perceptions of the flipped classroom were affirmative and positive.

Chi-Jen and Gwo-Jen (2018) made a well-designed experiment in English courses in a Taiwanese university. They used a clear and specific rubric of students’ oral English performance, including the relevant accuracy, comprehensibility, pronunciation, fluency, content and maturity of the language. Besides, the activities are divided into in-class activities with mobile technologies involved and out-of-class activities, and the t-tests of out-of-class activities for the high and low improvers in their detailed interactive behaviors include clarification, confirmation, retelling, challenge, suggestion, surmise and average, which focused on testing learners’ all-sided oral performance.

During the whole process, Chi-Jen and Gwo-Jen (2018) mentioned the terms “online community-based flipped learning” and “a quasi-experiment”. Online community-based flipped learning includes social networking site and educational videos, and the related mobile technologies can facilitate students to engage in-class and out-of-class activities. “To better understand students’ English oral learning process, oral performance, participation, and interactive patterns, an online community-based flipped classroom was developed, and a learning analytics approach was employed to explore the learning differences between high improvers and low improvers in the proposed approach.” (Chi-Jen & Gwo-Jen, 2018) In addition, a quasi-experiment is an empirical interventional study used to estimate the causal impact of an intervention on target population without random assignment. Even though there are some
limitations in the study include limited experimental subject and restricted experimental methods and results, it provides some research ideas on investigating factors which affect EFL students’ oral performance related to their language attitudes in a flipped classroom.

Similarly, Wen-Chi, Scott and Jie (2017) also deeply explored the flipped classroom strategies to enhance EFL Learners’ oral proficiency. They found that the use of LINE as an online learning community for flipped instruction could create a self-paced learning context and a collaborative constructivist learning environment. Under the circumstances, the participants’ oral proficiency was significantly enhanced as a result of the employment of an online learning community via LINE in the flipped instructional design. The constructive, collaborative, contextual, and self-directed pre-course tasks as well as some designed in-class activities could effectively motivate the participants to be more engaged and encouraged them to apply what they had learned to authentic settings.

Wen-Chi, Scott and Jie (2017) put forward some ideas in the article like MALL and seven pillars of flipped learning. Mall means mobile-assisted language learning. And seven pillars of flipped learning means flexible environment, learning culture, intentional content, professional educator, progressive networking learning activities, engaging effective learning activities and diversified seamless learning platform.

Here are some of their findings. “A student-centered learning culture allowed students to participate actively in collaborative and interactive instructional activities outside the classroom by means of the online learning community”. “Since the participants had already studied the reading passages and relevant idioms, the instruction in the classroom moved from detailed lecture about micro-level grammar rules to an interactive discussion over meaning clarification and the content of the chosen topic.” (Wen-Chi, Scott, & Jie, 2017)
From the above research finding, we can see that flipped classroom learning model can improve EFL learners’ English oral-performance on learning English speaking course to a certain extent.

3. Flipped Learning Model on EFL Learners’ Written-Performance on English Writing Courses

In addition to exploring effective flipped classroom methods on oral English teaching, Chi-Jen, Gwo-Jen, Qing-Ke and Jing-Fang (2018) focused on exploring effective flipped classroom teaching strategies on business English writing. They deeply explored a flipped contextual game-based learning approach which can enhance EFL learners’ English business writing performance and reflective behaviors. In this article, Chi-Jen et al. (2018) put forward some key terms including contextual learning, a virtual gasification environment and ANCOVA. Contextual learning is a situated learning method for better learning effect; a virtual gasification environment can provide rich contextual cues to reinforce learners’ perceptions of language input; ANCOVA means analysis of covariance which is a general linear model blending ANOVA and regression. Chi-Jen et al. (2018) made a series of specific figures and a well-designed open-ended questionnaire on organization, content, appearance and language usage of business writing with a specific research process. Meanwhile, a clear comparison between experimental group and control group was produced relevantly and ANCOVA results for business writing performance was showed finally.

“The flipped contextual game-based learning approach offers an effective environment in which students can better understand the contexts and knowledge of business trade as well as having more in-class time for practicing English business writing.” (Chi-Jen, et al., 2018)

From the above research finding, we can see that flipped classroom learning model can
improve EFL learners’ English written-performance on learning English writing course accordingly.

4. EFL learners’ English Learning Performance on Learning English with Effective Learning Strategy

Boevé, Meijer, Bosker, Vugteveen, Hoekstra and Albers (2017) made a thorough exploration on students’ study behavior in a flipped classroom learning environment. Boevé et al. (2017) found that when the flipped classroom was implemented, the demands of the learning environment would change for students. Meanwhile, even the response rate throughout the course was larger for the students in the flipped course, the results did not suggest that implementing a flipped classroom was a quick fix that leaded to improved student performance. Some students might benefit from the flipped design, but it might also be a source of frustration for others. They mentioned ethical standard, which involves systematizing, defending, and recommending concepts of right and wrong conduct and seeks to resolve questions of human morality by defining concepts like good and evil, right and wrong, virtue and vice, justice and crime.

Here is one of their findings. “Themes emerged that showed friction between student regulation of learning and the design of the flipped course. Three themes, more student regulation desired, more passive explanation desired, and student regulation necessary to benefit from the lecture, showed how students struggled with regulating their learning in the flipped course.” (Boevé, Meijer, Bosker, Vugteveen, Hoekstra, & Albers, 2017)

The strengths of their study involve specific research goal, clear formulated research questions, well-designed experimental method and complete research procedure with clear figure comparisons. Meanwhile, there are still some limitations in it, including behavioral diaries and
the use of institutional course evaluations. But it can provide some research ideas on enhancing EFL learners’ behaviors under the flipped classroom circumstance.

Another teaching experiment was implemented by Chi and Ruby (2017). They designed a series of research questions including the perceptions of teachers and students on flipped classroom and their relevant ways of using it in teaching and learning English and other subjects in order to test the using effect of flipped classroom in English teaching and learning in Hong Kong, China. Based on these questions, they conducted an elaborate research experiment with two randomized classes as examples. After analyzing the collected data, they found that students were positive about the flipped classroom in general, which could help them be more active, motivational and responsible for their own study. While, it might only useful for teaching certain subjects like English grammar, and was made for those students who were motivated and progressive in learning. Besides, the pre-lesson online videos could be helpful for English teaching. Here is one evaluation on flipped classroom teaching written by them. “This is especially important for students as they can learn to be more active and be more responsible for their own learning by studying the lesson topic before lessons.” (Chi & Ruby, 2017) Though there are certain limitations of the experiment including limited trial time, classes and subjects (only taking English grammar course as an example), the article provides a further research direction on how to make a proper use of flipped classroom in teaching different English subjects for EFL students.

In addition, LIU (2011) discussed deeply on the language attitudes of mainland Chinese university students on learning English courses. 302 participants from 5 top universities in Beijing showed their different language attitudes towards learning English courses after a series of careful tests. LIU made a conclusion that the results could confirm that “there is a communal
social identity that involves support for and knowledge of English in China, and they also imply that the present policies and teaching strategies concerning English education in China is appropriate” (LIU, 2011).

From all the above research finding, we can see that current appropriate teaching policies and strategies including flipped classroom learning model can improve EFL learners’ learning behaviors and performance on learning English to a certain extent.

**Summary**

Taken together, the research results indicate that effective EFL flipped classroom teaching relies on plenty of elements including appropriate and innovative EFL learning materials beyond the fixed textbooks, reasonable assessment criteria of EFL teaching and learning, relaxing and motivational learning environment, instructive and flexible teaching approaches and proper application software for flipped classroom teaching and learning. In addition, based upon some typical characteristics of EFL teaching in Chinese colleges, such as large-scale classes, fixed textbooks and unified syllabuses, educators need to implement a series of reforms on EFL flipped classroom teaching which are suitable for Chinese college EFL education status.

**Conclusion and Recommendation**

As we see, effective designing and implementing motivational strategies for the flipped classroom teaching, to a certain extent, will enhance learners’ motivation and strengthen the effectiveness of their autonomous learning performance, which will greatly improve their language proficiency, critical thinking abilities, cooperative skills, creativity and language attitudes towards EFL courses like English speaking and writing courses. While, there are certain
existing issues in teaching EFL courses including limited practice time, diffidence in study, typical large-scale class, single and routine assessment, and ineffective learning and teaching methods. Based upon the Chinese education social circumstance, exploring more effective and suitable EFL teaching and learning strategies is vitally important for all the EFL educators, and some aspects are needed to be fully considered in our flipped classroom teaching and research procedures in order to improve EFL learners’ language abilities as well as their language attitudes towards learning English courses authentically.

References


