

Article

Exploration of the Flipped Classroom Model for College Foreign Language Based on the WeChat Platform

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Abstract: The implementation of a flipped classroom model through the WeChat platform effectively embodies the teacher's guiding role while emphasizing the student's central position in the learning process. By restructuring traditional teaching practices, this approach transforms students from passive recipients of knowledge into proactive participants in learning activities. It fosters greater learner engagement, cultivates collaborative skills, and strengthens students' autonomy in managing their own learning. Furthermore, this pedagogical model enhances students' digital literacy and information-processing abilities, thereby contributing to improved overall quality in college-level foreign language education. Beyond individual learning outcomes, the integration of the flipped classroom with digital platforms facilitates the seamless combination of the Internet and educational practices. It enables richer access to diverse educational resources, promotes flexible and personalized learning pathways, and encourages innovative teaching methodologies in an information-rich environment. Importantly, this approach not only challenges the constraints of traditional classroom settings but also supports the development of a dynamic, interactive, and technology-enhanced learning ecosystem, which is crucial for preparing students to meet the demands of the digital age.

Keywords: WeChat platform; flipped classroom; college foreign language teaching

1. Introduction

1.1. Policy Background and Technological Imperatives

In recent years, the development of educational technology has become a central focus in higher education, particularly in foreign language instruction. According to the *College English Teaching Guide*, English teachers are encouraged to enhance their awareness and proficiency in applying modern digital tools: "Encouraging teachers to build and use micro-lectures and MOOCs, making use of high-quality online resources to transform and expand teaching content, and implementing blended teaching models such as flipped classrooms based on both traditional and online classes, will help students move towards active, autonomous and personalized learning" [1]. This policy underscores a broader shift in educational philosophy, emphasizing that technology should not only serve as a supplementary tool but also fundamentally reshape teaching methodologies to foster more engaging and effective learning environments.

The integration of digital platforms into classroom instruction reflects a growing recognition that students' learning experiences are closely linked to technological fluency. Educators are thus tasked not only with delivering content but also with designing pedagogical strategies that leverage online resources, encourage self-directed learning, and support differentiated instruction. In this context, the flipped classroom emerges as a

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key approach that aligns with both national educational guidelines and contemporary digital trends [2].

1.2. Origin and Development of the Flipped Classroom

The flipped classroom teaching model was first introduced in the United States in the early 21st century as an innovative response to limitations in traditional pedagogical approaches. Unlike conventional methods, which prioritize in-class lectures followed by after-class practice, the flipped classroom inverts this sequence: students engage with instructional materials, such as video lectures or online readings, prior to class, allowing in-class time to be devoted to interactive exercises, problem-solving, and collaborative discussions.

This model emphasizes student-centered learning, positioning students as active agents in knowledge construction rather than passive recipients. The teacher's role shifts from being the sole source of information to a facilitator and guide, providing support, feedback, and mentorship throughout the learning process. Research in educational psychology suggests that this shift can significantly enhance motivation, deepen understanding, and promote higher-order thinking skills, particularly in language learning contexts where active engagement and practice are critical.

1.3. Adoption and Impact in Chinese Higher Education

In China, the flipped classroom has gained increasing attention in recent years as part of broader educational reforms aimed at modernizing university teaching practices. Chinese universities are exploring ways to integrate this model into College English courses, leveraging platforms such as WeChat, MOOCs, and other digital resources to extend learning beyond the classroom. This adoption not only aligns with government directives but also addresses the growing demand for personalized, autonomous, and technologically enriched learning experiences among students.

The implementation of flipped classrooms in Chinese higher education has demonstrated several pedagogical benefits. Students reportedly show greater engagement, improved collaborative skills, and enhanced ability to manage their own learning. Simultaneously, teachers are able to focus class time on interactive activities, practical applications, and individualized guidance. Beyond these immediate educational outcomes, the flipped classroom facilitates the integration of information technology into daily teaching practice, promoting innovation, flexibility, and the creation of a more dynamic, student-centered learning environment.

2. The Reform Experiment Conducted

2.1. Purpose and Participants of the Experiment

The primary purpose of this experimental reform is to explore how modern social networking platforms can enhance traditional college English teaching methods. Specifically, the study aims to upgrade the conventional teaching approach, which predominantly relies on PowerPoint presentations, by integrating the flipped classroom model with the WeChat platform. This integration seeks to redefine the roles of teachers and students in classroom interactions, transforming students from passive recipients into active participants. By promoting autonomous learning and personalized study plans, the intervention encourages students to take ownership of their learning process. Furthermore, the real-time communication and information-sharing capabilities of WeChat are leveraged to facilitate immediate discussion, reflection, and collaborative knowledge construction, thereby deepening students' understanding and internalization of course content.

The experimental study involved a total of 716 sophomore students majoring in non-English disciplines, organized into 16 natural classes within the college. The selection of participants ensured a representative sample of the target population, reflecting the

diverse academic backgrounds and learning experiences of non-English majors. All participants were briefed on the experimental procedures and objectives to ensure informed engagement and active participation throughout the intervention.

This study also intended to examine the potential pedagogical benefits of blending online and offline teaching modalities. By providing students with pre-class learning materials and structured collaborative tasks, the experiment aimed to observe changes in students' engagement, motivation, and ability to apply knowledge in practical contexts. In addition, it sought to assess teachers' facilitation strategies and the effectiveness of digital tools in promoting interactive and student-centered learning environments.

2.2. Design and Implementation of the Experiment

The intervention design centered on the integration of WeChat as a digital platform to support the flipped classroom. Three days prior to each formal class session, instructors released a variety of learning materials—including texts, images, audio recordings, and video clips—via WeChat group chats. These resources were strategically organized according to the lesson content, highlighting key concepts and difficult points. Students were then assigned to small study groups, with specific tasks and responsibilities distributed among group members.

Within their groups, students first engaged in autonomous study, reviewing the materials, discussing concepts, and preparing reports or presentations that summarized their findings. This pre-class preparation was designed to cultivate independent learning skills, enhance comprehension, and foster collaborative problem-solving abilities. During the classroom sessions, each group presented its findings to classmates, prompting peer questions and group discussions. The teacher then guided the class by addressing misconceptions, reinforcing critical knowledge points, and summarizing the lesson's main themes.

To further assess learning outcomes, the experiment utilized WeChat's QR code functionality to conduct real-time in-class quizzes. By sharing QR codes within the group, instructors were able to quickly evaluate students' understanding of the material and identify areas requiring additional explanation. This immediate feedback mechanism ensured that learning gaps were promptly addressed, while also providing students with opportunities to self-assess their progress.

2.3. Post-Class Activities and Knowledge Consolidation

Beyond in-class activities, WeChat facilitated ongoing learning, feedback, and personalized guidance. Students continued their discussions in group chats, engaged in one-on-one interactions with teachers, and utilized WeChat Moments and official accounts to access supplementary learning materials. These post-class activities enabled students to revisit and consolidate knowledge, practice critical thinking, and receive targeted feedback tailored to their individual needs.

Furthermore, the use of WeChat as an integrated learning platform supported the cultivation of digital literacy and information management skills. Students learned to navigate multiple channels for academic collaboration, resource sharing, and reflection. The continuous engagement both inside and outside the classroom promoted deeper internalization of knowledge, reinforced collaborative learning, and fostered a dynamic, interactive, and technology-enhanced educational environment.

Through this comprehensive intervention, the study aimed to demonstrate how combining flipped classroom pedagogy with social media platforms could enhance student engagement, improve learning outcomes, and transform traditional teaching practices in higher education.

3. The Achievements and Deficiencies of the Reform Experiment

3.1. Achievements Obtained

The experimental study demonstrated a significant improvement in students' learning enthusiasm and engagement. In traditional classroom models, students predominantly serve as passive recipients of knowledge, often focusing on rote memorization rather than active comprehension. In contrast, the flipped classroom transforms students into active explorers of knowledge. By engaging with pre-class tasks, students are encouraged to interpret materials according to their own interests and learning styles, fostering a sense of autonomy and freedom in the learning process. This personalized approach not only enhances knowledge absorption and retention but also substantially increases students' intrinsic motivation and interest in the subject matter [3].

Another notable achievement was the establishment of a more efficient and interactive classroom model. In flipped classrooms, students present and explain knowledge they have acquired prior to class, while simultaneously posing questions about challenges encountered during pre-class tasks. Peer-to-peer responses and discussions allow students to collaboratively solve problems, while teachers act as facilitators who identify learning gaps, clarify difficult concepts, and provide targeted guidance [4]. This interactive model addresses common issues in traditional classrooms, such as student shyness or reluctance to ask questions, thereby improving overall teaching efficiency and fostering a more participatory learning environment.

Furthermore, the flipped classroom significantly enhanced students' awareness of teamwork and collaborative problem-solving. Many pre-class tasks require interdisciplinary skills, including both subject-specific knowledge and technical competencies in software usage. Students actively engaged in group discussions via WeChat to seek optimal solutions, thereby internalizing knowledge while simultaneously developing essential team skills. Teachers, in turn, benefited from observing students' innovative approaches and technical proficiency, creating a reciprocal learning environment that promotes mutual growth and advances both pedagogical practice and student capabilities.

3.2. Existing Deficiencies

Despite the successes, several challenges and deficiencies emerged during the experiment. One key issue lies in the evaluation mechanism. Unlike traditional classrooms, the flipped model extends learning beyond scheduled class hours, often relying on group-based tasks and post-class activities. Students with lower English proficiency or weaker intrinsic motivation may contribute minimally while benefiting from the collective efforts of their group. Additionally, the redistribution of classroom authority, with students taking a more active role, can lead to a perception of "learning independently," which may reduce accountability. Teachers therefore face the dual challenge of monitoring task completion, ensuring equitable contribution, and maintaining high levels of engagement. Establishing a fair and effective evaluation system is essential to balance student autonomy with performance accountability.

Another limitation is the substantial time and effort required for task preparation and classroom management. Implementing a flipped classroom entails extensive pre-class preparation, including designing group assignments, curating diverse multimedia materials, reviewing student submissions, providing corrective feedback, creating micro-lectures, and participating in after-class discussions. These responsibilities considerably increase teachers' workload and demand significant personal time outside of regular working hours [5]. To maintain the sustainability of such reforms, it is necessary to explore strategies for reducing teacher workload, such as leveraging automated assessment tools, collaborative content creation, or shared teaching resources, while simultaneously sustaining high levels of teaching effectiveness and enthusiasm.

Lastly, while students generally respond positively to the flipped classroom model, disparities in digital literacy and access to technology can affect participation and learning outcomes. Some students may struggle with managing online resources, coordinating group discussions, or utilizing WeChat features efficiently. Addressing these disparities through targeted training, guidance, and technological support is critical to ensure equitable learning opportunities and maximize the pedagogical benefits of the reform.

3.3. Summary of Achievements and Challenges

Overall, the reform experiment highlighted the substantial pedagogical potential of integrating the flipped classroom model with social media platforms such as WeChat. The approach successfully increased student engagement, promoted interactive and collaborative learning, and enhanced knowledge internalization. Simultaneously, the study revealed areas that require further refinement, including evaluation fairness, teacher workload, and digital equity among students. Future iterations of the reform should aim to balance these challenges with the pedagogical advantages, ensuring that flipped classroom innovations remain both effective and sustainable in higher education contexts.

4. Reflections and Inspirations

4.1. Diversified Teaching Model

Recent surveys indicate that English teaching in many colleges and universities in our province continues to rely heavily on traditional, teacher-centered approaches. In such classrooms, students often assume passive roles, especially when their English proficiency is limited. Consequently, many English lessons have become "one-man shows," dominated by teachers, with minimal student interaction or participation. The classroom atmosphere in these settings tends to be static, which not only diminishes learning enthusiasm but also reduces overall teaching effectiveness. This situation underscores the urgent need for pedagogical reform that fosters more dynamic, student-centered learning environments.

The flipped classroom, often described as "an educational revolution in the Internet era," offers a compelling alternative. By leveraging the capabilities of mobile Internet technology, this model readjusts the temporal structure of learning: students acquire knowledge independently before class through video lectures and other multimedia resources, while in-class time is devoted to knowledge internalization through discussions, problem-solving, and collaborative exercises [6]. This rearrangement of learning time not only conserves classroom hours but also increases the intensity and depth of knowledge transmission, providing more opportunities for interactive, applied learning during class sessions.

Autonomous learning, a central tenet of the flipped classroom, empowers students to take control of their own learning process. It represents a transition from externally guided learning to self-directed, proactive engagement, enhancing both the breadth and depth of academic achievement. Strategies to cultivate autonomy include structured group tasks, pre-class research assignments, and in-class discussion and sharing. By integrating these methods into the flipped classroom framework, students are encouraged to actively engage with content, develop critical thinking skills, and cultivate a sense of responsibility for their own learning, thereby creating a more motivated and participatory classroom culture.

4.2. Utilize WeChat in an All-round Way to Build an English Learning Platform

With advances in technology, the integration of digital tools into English teaching has become indispensable. Traditional computer-based teaching offers convenience in accessing resources and preparing course materials, yet it also faces limitations. For instance, classrooms must meet specific technical requirements, hardware can become

outdated quickly, and teachers are often constrained by fixed schedules, limiting their ability to address students' personalized learning needs. These challenges highlight the need for more flexible, mobile, and accessible digital platforms.

WeChat, as a versatile social media and communication tool, addresses many of these limitations. Its functions—including real-time information transmission, multimedia resource sharing, and interactive communication—enable teachers to create dynamic learning environments. Pre-class materials such as texts, images, videos, and web links can be disseminated efficiently to student groups, facilitating timely preview and engagement. During class, QR codes can be used to distribute exercises, assessments, and supplementary materials, compensating for gaps in comprehension due to in-class distractions. Post-class, teachers and students can continue discussions, share learning experiences, and provide personalized feedback, thus enhancing interaction, promoting timely clarification of misunderstandings, and improving overall teaching and learning efficiency.

By utilizing WeChat comprehensively, educators can establish a flexible, student-centered learning ecosystem. This approach supports continuous learning, fosters collaborative problem-solving, and integrates both synchronous and asynchronous interactions, creating an educational environment that adapts to the needs of modern learners.

4.3. Realize the Combination of the Flipped Classroom and the WeChat Platform

The integration of the flipped classroom with the WeChat platform represents a significant step forward in modern foreign language education. This model simultaneously emphasizes the guiding role of teachers and the active engagement of students. By transforming traditionally passive learners into active participants, it enhances students' initiative, collaboration, and autonomous learning capacity. Moreover, the approach improves students' digital literacy and ability to manage and internalize information, ultimately contributing to higher-quality college-level foreign language instruction.

Beyond immediate learning outcomes, this model facilitates the broader convergence of Internet technology and education. It encourages innovative pedagogical practices, integrates diverse educational resources, and reshapes traditional classroom structures. By leveraging the interactive, mobile, and collaborative features of WeChat, educators can design lessons that are adaptive, personalized, and conducive to deeper engagement. The combined approach not only addresses the limitations of conventional teaching but also provides a scalable framework for educational innovation in information-rich environments, equipping students with both linguistic competence and digital skills necessary for the 21st-century learning landscape.

5. Conclusion

This study examined the implementation of a flipped classroom model supported by the WeChat platform in college English teaching. The findings indicate that the integration of pre-class autonomous learning, in-class interactive activities, and post-class collaborative discussions significantly enhances students' engagement, motivation, and learning outcomes. By transforming students from passive recipients into active participants, the model fosters greater autonomy, collaborative spirit, and digital literacy, while simultaneously providing teachers with opportunities to guide learning more effectively and identify knowledge gaps.

The experiment further demonstrates that the flipped classroom, when combined with digital social platforms such as WeChat, can optimize the allocation of classroom time, improve the efficiency of knowledge transmission, and facilitate continuous learning beyond the physical classroom. Students benefit not only from enriched access to learning resources but also from structured opportunities for discussion, reflection, and

peer feedback. Teachers, on the other hand, can leverage the platform's real-time interaction features to provide personalized guidance and enhance classroom management.

Despite certain challenges, including the increased workload for instructors and the need for effective evaluation mechanisms, the overall reform highlights the potential of technology-enhanced, student-centered pedagogy in higher education. In conclusion, the flipped classroom under the WeChat platform offers a viable and scalable approach for improving foreign language education, promoting active learning, and fostering digital competencies. This study provides valuable insights for educators seeking to innovate teaching practices and for institutions aiming to integrate digital platforms effectively into curriculum design.

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