

## What is it and why try it?

The flipped classroom is an approach where classroom instruction is given to students at home via a video, and application usually given for homework is completed in class with the teacher's support.

Teachers began flipping their classrooms in subjects such as science when they became frustrated that many of their lessons were taken up with giving students information. Students who struggled to complete their homework without the teacher there to support them were unable to master the topic.

The teachers exploited new technologies by creating short videos that provided classroom instruction. Students watched these in their own time before a lesson and then class time was spent on applying that information with the teacher there to support them. The teacher could differentiate tasks for different learners to ensure that everyone was challenged and supported at an appropriate level.

In language learning terms, flipping the classroom means students listening to or reading information about language at home before a lesson, leaving more time for practice of that language in the classroom. Alternatively, it could be information about an exam technique or how to write an informal letter. Lessons then provide more opportunities for practice of language and skills development with the teacher there to support, correct and challenge the students as they complete tasks. Students can work on the same tasks, or work in groups on different tasks to ensure they work at a level suitable for them.

The flipped classroom is still a fairly new approach and so research on its efficacy is ongoing. Anecdotally, teachers who flip their classrooms believe that the approach allows students to become more independent in their learning. They learn how to learn. Rather than receive information in the classroom, they have to take more control and ensure they learn it outside the classroom, watching the video or re-reading written material several times if necessary. In class, they have time to ask the teacher questions if they still don't understand and choose when they need support. This autonomy motivates students and results in a higher level of engagement according to teachers. In terms of language learning, students can gain more practice time and receive more feedback from the teacher on performance.

Be aware that some pre-teen students may be only beginning to develop the self-study skills required to prepare effectively for a flipped classroom lesson. If you are using this approach, begin gradually and make sure you have a backup plan for students that haven't prepared, e.g. they must watch the video while the rest of the class enjoys a game to start the lesson.

You also need to be aware of possible barriers to watching videos at home, such as internet access.

## Current best practices and methods

The following are the typical stages of a lesson when flipping the classroom.

### 1 Preparing the homework

Teachers can provide instruction through video or written material. These can be created by the teacher or sourced from an alternative source e.g. their Student's Book or online. If teachers make videos, they are usually five to ten minutes long and comprise the teacher recording themselves with their device, standing at the board and explaining the language. Alternatively, a video can be made using screencasting software which allows voice recording over slides.

### 2 Students watch the video for homework

In the previous lesson, the teacher sets the classroom instruction task as homework, usually with an accompanying activity to check understanding. Students do the tasks at home. The task that checks understanding might be completed online as this allows the teacher to check understanding before the lesson and make adjustments to their lesson plan if students have found the language particularly easy or difficult. Alternatively students may bring the completed task on paper to discuss at the beginning of the lesson.

### 3 In class review

In the lesson, the teacher begins by checking students' understanding of the content of the video. It could be through checking answers to the homework task, oral questioning or a quick paired quiz. Students are given the opportunity to ask questions.

### 4 Practice, practice, practice

Students are then given several practice tasks to complete for the rest of the lesson while the teacher monitors and offers support. This practice might be individual at first as they complete written exercises. It can then be communicative as students work in pairs or groups to complete oral tasks. Fast finishers can move onto new tasks so that they are challenged. Weaker students can receive extra support such as prompts.

### 5 Reflection on performance

Finally, at the end of the lesson, students reflect on what they have learnt to help them identify progress and areas where they still need to improve. These reflections allow students to gain a greater understanding of their strength and weaknesses, and encourage them to set achievable learning goals for future lessons.

## Efficacy

Keeping track of learner progress is one way of finding out whether flipping the classroom is effective or not. This could be through monitoring students' performance in language tasks or self-reflection. For example, you could ask students to feed back using questions such as the following, offering a ranking of 1–5 (1 = not, 5 = very). This can be via an anonymous questionnaire or orally in class (in L1 if necessary).

- Do you like watching the videos at home?
- How easy is it for you to watch the videos at home?
- Do you think watching the videos at home helps you learn?

## How does the Gold Experience series help me with that?

Gold Experience provides the following resources that will help you to flip your classroom.

### Grammar presentations

The teacher online resource materials include some PowerPoint Presentations of the grammar from each unit. These can be used by the teacher in class, when explaining language, but they can also be printed out for students to read at home when flipping the classroom. The slides contain detailed information about the meaning, function and form of the target language with examples. There is a final task that checks students' understanding.

**Adverbs: ever and never**

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### Workbook support

The workbook contains exercises on the grammar points taught in each unit. These can be used either as homework prior to the grammar lesson in order to check what learners already know. With students at this level, the grammar may be completely new to them and so a test, teach, test approach may be challenging, but you can make a decision about this when you get to know your class.

Alternatively, the Workbook exercises can be completed in class to provide as much practice as possible while the teacher is available to offer support and clarify any confusing aspects of the language.

#### present perfect with *ever* and *never*

##### 4 Make questions with the present perfect and *ever*.

1 you / see / a full moon?

2 your teacher / be / to Australia?

3 your parents / go / mountain climbing?

4 your best friend / sleep / in a rainforest?

5 you / find / a mouse in your house?

6 you / swim / in the sea?

## To take it further ...

Here are some tips to help you to flip your classroom effectively:

### Tip 1: If you create your own videos, personalise them

Just as we would try to personalise language in class when we clarify it for students, try to personalise it in videos too. For example, give a short anecdote about yourself using the target language. You can then use sentences from that anecdote to explain how the language is used, formed and pronounced.

### Tip 2: Motivate student to want to complete the homework tasks

It's important that students complete the homework because if they don't, they'll find it difficult to complete the practice tasks in class. Pose a question and elicit answers but don't give the correct answer. Tell students that they have to do the homework task to find out. For example, before a lesson on past simple irregular forms write the following sentence on the board:

*Yesterday I bought a new book.*

Tell students that this sentence is factually correct but ask if it's grammatically correct. Tell students to watch the video and come back to the next lesson, and say whether anything needs to be changed and why.

If you make your own videos, engage students by teasing the context so that they want to know more and have to watch the video to find it out. Let's imagine that you tell a short anecdote in the video using the target language before explaining it. You could show a photo that represents the anecdote or tell the beginning of an anecdote but not the end. Elicit what the anecdote is but don't tell the students the correct answer. They do their homework to find out.

### Tip 3: What to do when students don't do the homework

If possible, arrange for students who haven't done their homework to go to the back of the class and do it while the other students start to practise using it. Make technology available there if the homework is a video. Once students get into the habit of a flipped classroom, they tend to do the homework but even the best students sometimes forget or are unable to.

### Tip 4: What to do when students don't have the technology

Try to arrange for all students to have access to any online material they need do the homework after school or before school if not everyone in the class has a device or internet access at home. Alternatively, create study pairs or groups where at least one student has a device and can watch the video with someone who does not.

### Tip 5: Help learners to become more independent in their learning

Students often need to practise to work independently. To help them do this, make learning goals clear so they know why they are doing the homework before the language lesson and how it will help them. At the end of the lesson, encourage students to reflect on their performance in the lesson so they can identify progress and recognise strengths and weaknesses. This can help them to set personalised learning goals and progress more quickly.

### Teacher's Book support

In the Teacher's Book, prior to a grammar lesson, there are notes for the teacher on what materials are available when flipping the classroom.

- 1 If you used the flipped classroom approach at the end of the last lesson, say to students: *I have travelled to America*, and elicit what tense this is (present perfect).