



A Blended Learning Practice of "Flipped Classroom" Mode in Intercultural Communication Course

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Article History	Abstract
Received: 06 June 2023 Revised: 05 Sept 2023 Accepted: 14 Oct 2023	<p><i>This paper examines the flipped classroom models used in the online intercultural communication course that was created by instructors and students. Teachers adjust to a blended learning approach created by integrating online and in-person instruction. The secret to providing students with a good education is to put them first when developing the curriculum because of the unique aspects of online learning. To help students, develop practical intercultural communication skills, instructors apply the case analysis method with their class. A useful and efficient teaching plan that included teaching goals, content knowledge, and teaching techniques after considering the comments from the students was created. Students were assisted in taking part in the entire experience of examining genuine instances and finding solutions. Students are taught about the "Performance Culture Approach" methodology and urged to discuss real-world issues in the classroom. Students can identify a workable solution to the issue to minimize communication barriers and successfully conduct multicultural conversations by examining and debating real examples.</i></p>
CC License CC-BY-NC-SA 4.0	<p>Keywords: <i>Blended learning, Flipped classrooms, intercultural communication course, performance culture approach, online learning, active learning</i></p>

1. Introduction

With rising demands for cultural diversity, the tendency toward multiculturalism has emerged. For students who study on Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages, "Intercultural Communication" is currently a required and well-liked course. By utilizing modern digital technologies and broadcasts, attracts a large audience and encourages the study of languages and cultures. Therefore, it is important for students to master the traits, forms, media, components, and purposes of communication. Communication is dynamic; it's a constant, evolving process. Communication is participatory; individuals bring their own special backgrounds and experiences to communication events and engage in conversation with one another. Under specific social and physical dynamics, communication occurs in a physical and social setting. The complex web of behaviors that make up communication is a reflection of how individuals live and interact with one another in a complicated social environment. During study interactions, students from various cultures interact. They examine the various components and patterns of culture, talk about how language and culture interact, study verbal and nonverbal communication, and place particular emphasis on the challenges and difficulties that arise during cross-cultural interactions. Additionally, they examine several instances of actual intercultural conversation, focusing in particular on multiculturalism in the global context.

The goal of an intercultural communication course is to advance global understanding and intercultural education. We work to create a diverse community from an intercultural studies point of view. In addition to having a solid understanding of various moral principles, worldviews, and behavioral

patterns, students will get familiar with the concepts, vocabularies, theories, and abilities they will likely meet during the course of the study. They can observe how culture affects interactions with individuals from various cultural backgrounds, learn to anticipate and address potential issues in the real world, and finally get rid of cultural barriers to learning. For instance, the value system is concerned with how individuals view their interpersonal relationships. Collective cultures prioritize the group to be the most significant social construct. Individual objectives are subordinated to group ties. While the individualistic culture holds that everyone should have full autonomy over their lives and equal rights. Information is conveyed in high-context societies through status, actions, the usage of time and space, or even silence. In low-context societies, the majority of data is communicated verbally, and little of it is incorporated into the participants' context. Analyzing actual examples using the performance culture approach is a useful technique to recognize these ideas.

The Online Classroom system is used to flip the course. It is possible to customize lesson plans and instructional materials. With full process assistance, teachers may carry out their lessons precisely and evaluate students more successfully and scientifically. Students progressively come to see how important ubiquitous learning is. Teachers set up classes based on the skills of their students. Due to COVID-19's effects, the intercultural communication course was moved online in the spring of 2020 and resumed with traditional classroom instruction in the fall of 2020. We draw the conclusion that various approaches have various advantages through the comparison of the two versions. As a result, we built up a flipped classroom in 2021, introduced the "blended learning" option to the course, and saw positive outcomes in the web-based learning setting. The goal of this training is to foster practical intercultural competency. Foreign students from different nations participated in our experimental courses over the course of time.

Blended learning

A. From Offline to Online

Online instruction is now more flexible, convenient, targeted, and personalized than traditional face-to-face instruction. In the online environment, you can complete all of the necessary offline learning tasks at any time and from any location, including course materials, semester assignments, practice sessions, and final papers. The basic explanation of blended learning includes any feasible fusion of computer-mediated and in-person instruction. It aims to make the most of the many components and create useful work settings for both students and teachers, not just a simple contrast of physical presence and technological mediation but a researched alternation of the two. Teachers started using the hybrid technique, which combines the public mailbox, Tencent Conference, WhatsApp group, and online Classroom application to complete work.

Teachers have the ability to send out notifications, present PowerPoint and course materials, offer learning resources, manage the classroom, post and check assignments, assess students, and quickly receive feedback. In the online Classroom, students can access curriculum resources like learning books, videos, preview themes, and homework. Lectures, group discussions, case analyses, student presentations, and performances are all held during Tencent Conference. To contact one another and share essential files, use the WhatsApp group and public mailbox. Together, they produce an online classroom, delivery systems, and media for knowledge distribution and interaction assistance. This combines education, teaching, learning, and contexts.

B. Flipped Classroom

A flipped classroom involves not just flipping the way knowledge is taught and internalized, but also reforming education's core principles, subject matter, instructional strategies, and evaluation practices. The intercultural communication course currently uses a "flipped classroom" approach that combines the benefits of traditional classroom instruction with those of online learning. It not only makes sure that students and professors interact face-to-face, but it also makes possible the sharing of internet materials and autonomous study at any time and from any location (ubiquitous learning). Flipped education is said to have affected how well pupils learned and how they perceived it.

In our flipped classroom, called an online Classroom, students receive learning assignments in advance, preview the PowerPoint presentation, and answer the preview questions. On the teaching platform,

teachers can construct a number of classroom activities, including electronic voting, objective multiple-choice questions, fill-in-the-blank questions, and subjectivity questions. Automatic grading is used in the classroom, and students can receive feedback on their homework before class to help them focus at that time. Teachers might compile a list of common errors made by pupils so they can add more focused instruction in subsequent lessons. By using a problem-guided method in the classroom, students are motivated to take part in the case study of cross-cultural communication. Students can turn in assignments and review courses by watching the replay at their own leisure after class. They can also get ready for the following lesson. Additionally, students can independently keep track of their own learning progress, have more precise control over the chapter's learning objectives, and recognize their own learning challenges and successes. Tencent Conference offers communication chances. Students have the option of immediately responding to professors' inquiries, asking questions, or voicing their ideas in person. Presentations, problem-case studies, and group discussions are interesting.

Intercultural communication course

In line with the UNESCO recommendation that education should emphasize "learning to live together" as well as the acquisition of knowledge, the words "living together" and "conversation" are frequently used in educational policies and curricula. Intercultural education has evolved from being an emerging notion to being discussed often in mainstream policy debates and in the conversation around theory and practice in education across the globe. Both Indians and international students can take the intercultural communication course. A multinational class is the right setting. Students from all cultural origins come together, freely express their opinions, comprehend one another, and appreciate all people. This class resembles a miniature United Nations. The goal of this course is to enhance students' social skills so they can interact with individuals from diverse cultures and communicate effectively with them.

Some specialists concentrate on how individuals adjust to a novel and foreign cultural setting and how their communication behaviors affect their adaptation. It is now widely accepted that adjusting to a foreign environment can be challenging, especially when that environment has entirely distinct customs, social structures, languages, and cultures. Having trouble adjusting to such unfamiliar situations might lead to psychological issues like anxiety and sadness. This course's objective is to assist students in fast adjusting to new situations by offering practical solutions to problems and engaging in constructive problem-solving dialogues. Meeting the challenges of an integrated society and world requires knowledge and expertise in intercultural communication. Intercultural communication courses with a research- or experience-based perspective are typically required at colleges. This course covers ethics and other current issues in addition to explaining the practical application. Students are asked not simply to think more critically about topics, but also to personally influence the direction of the discipline. This course aims to develop in its pupils an open-minded, determined, and optimistic character that will serve them well in the future.

Graduate students from different departments attend the course. They established foreign study cooperation groups to work together on actual intercultural communication exercises. Foreign students first collaborate to communicate their understanding and thoughts on the fundamental theories and principles while studying the theory of intercultural in the classroom. The student organization would then decide on a topic and present or write a report as a group. In actuality, they were incredibly imaginative and produced a number of short videos and a small play that convey many true stories. These types of activities can simulate numerous actual instances of cross-cultural communication in everyday life, allowing the class to identify the root causes of issues and come up with fixes. Students from all the departments can effectively improve their intercultural communication skills by understanding and resolving issues in intercultural communication through theory and practice, as well as by experiencing real contradictions and tensions in interactions.

A. Teaching Philosophy

This course's teaching methodology is teacher-guided and student-centered. The goal of intercultural communication classes is specific, and they are created to meet those demands. The course's major objective is to teach students intercultural communication skills as well as how to assess problems from various cultural perspectives and come up with autonomous solutions. Students would come to their own judgments while honing their communication skills. To accomplish this, teachers should provide

lessons that are engaging for students, assist them in finding solutions to real-world intercultural communication issues, and help them develop their cognitive and thinking skills. The ability to identify, catalog, and analyze general intercultural occurrences should be developed in students. Teachers should additionally give students more instruction on the subject, sufficient learning materials, and encouragement to conduct an independent, in-depth study using images, videos, real-world examples, survey report findings, etc.

B. Main Teaching Methods

The following are the two main teaching strategies: task-based learning and interactive learning.

The teacher-student interaction and the student-student interaction are the two key ways in which this course's interactive teaching style is portrayed. The discussion and case analysis that follows the warm-up video, from the standpoint of teacher-student interaction, can give students more chances to express their opinions, foster a relaxed communication system, and encourage more engagement between teachers and students. Because the course is designed for students from various cultural backgrounds, it is only normal that there are many informational and cognitive disparities among students from the standpoint of student-student interaction. A carefully planned teaching link will run smoothly via group conversation and classroom Q&A. Students can engage in thinking conflicts to create an engaging classroom environment and maximize the benefits of student engagement and cooperative learning.

One of the communicative exercises used in language and culture classes is the group project. The benefits of task-based learning in intercultural communication courses are highlighted in the group discussion: 1. It is task-centered, strives to address real-world issues, and has genuine communication traits. 2. Combine language structure use with topic conversation. 3. Increase the quantity and calibre of language contact and negotiation among pupils. Group activities can help students feel less anxious while also increasing their drive and enthusiasm in learning a new language or cultural tradition. Teachers act as promoters and organisers in this process: 1. Create task lists for students to help them visualise and concretize each activity. 2. Discuss a variety of subjects while using formal terminology. 3. Increase the quantity and calibre of language contact and negotiation among pupils. Group activities can help students feel less anxious while also increasing their drive and enthusiasm in learning a new language or cultural tradition. Teachers act as promoters and organizers in this process: 1. Create task lists for students to assist them to visualise and concretize each activity. To help students demonstrate their communication awareness and perform the communicative activity, list the phrases and expressions they will need to utilize.

Performance culture approach

Intercultural communication audio-visual cases

The goal of the course is to use students as its primary audience, increase their desire for knowledge and learning, help them integrate theory and practice, and examine and discuss current intercultural challenges. The flipped classroom model is used in the instructional design to naturally integrate student self-study, class discussions, group projects, and real-world simulations in order to develop students' intercultural communication awareness and substantially enhance their intercultural communication skills. The educational aspect is having Chinese and international students from various cultural backgrounds collaborate to address actual cross-cultural communication issues. It contributes to laying the groundwork for academic study and research within the curriculum framework.

The performance culture method is an excellent strategy to stimulate students' critical thinking, analytical skills, and mentality. The Performance Culture has two characteristics: learning how to participate in a different culture and learning about strange civilizations. Students use the games "Terms" and "Actions" to practice scenarios as they learn how to make interpersonal contact in different culture. Students eventually develop cultural awareness as part of lifelong learning. This teaching approach stresses language development through exposure to and practices in the target language culture from the standpoint of cross-cultural communication.

Course evaluation report

From the spring semester of 2020 to the spring semester of 2022, we provided 10 mixed-nationality intercultural communication classes for online flipped classroom techniques. Students participate actively in their training. Before courses, during classes, and after classes, international students are eager to peruse internet resources and interact with their counterparts via social media and online interaction. Because of this, blended learning is more efficient than traditional teaching approaches. Regarding academic achievement, a student's perspective towards flipped classroom teaching has a significant, and in this case highly favorable, impact on how they see their academic achievements. When used in a flipped learning context, formative assessment improves students' perceptions of their academic results. Students' perceptions of results are best explained by the combination of these two factors (attitude and formative evaluation). The benefits of a flipped classroom on students' teaching-learning processes should be further investigated.

4. Conclusion

Based on the use of the flipped classroom style in intercultural communication courses, students have generally embraced the blended learning approach. With the benefits of e-learning, students can access extensive materials and focused exercises from the learning system, as well as quick responses and additional assistance from teacher's one-on-one. -Foreign Student Groups play a significant role in the intercultural communication process in a variety of online and offline activities. The Online Classroom, a virtual classroom, provides students with a learning environment in cyberspace and completes the flipped classroom. This is successful task-based learning. This course develops students' intercultural sensitivity (the ability to effectively identify, accept, and respect cultural differences) and intercultural competence (the behavioural capability to adapt to a new culture). And the only way we can overcome cultural differences and engage in successful cross-cultural interactions is through international competence. Students can develop personality strength, communication skills, psychological flexibility, and cultural awareness if they learn how to gain more knowledge of a culture and its practices as well as how to apply that knowledge, attitudes, and skills in the context of real-time communication and interaction.

In conclusion, the blended learning approach can combine the benefits of online and classroom instruction and encourage the fusion of online, offline, and educational technologies. Students develop active learning and self-control skills. By establishing online and offline learning goals and creating study cooperation groups with foreign students to carry out practical tasks together, the flipped classroom can assist students in studying the intercultural communication course efficiently. The student organization reports can represent many actual instances of cross-cultural communication in real life, identify the root causes of issues immediately, and offer remedies. Students need to look at the breadth and depth of how culture affects communication behaviour. Different cultures produce different value systems and interpretations of meaning. Students should accurately comprehend the ways in which different cultures explain their behaviour in order to understand the cultural distinctions in cognitive structure. In order to improve their intercultural communication abilities and better prepare them for future social and interpersonal communication as well as their educational careers, students might imitate real-life inconsistencies and tensions in interactions.

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