

# Teaching Design of Foreign Trade English Correspondence Based on Flipped Classroom

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**Abstract:** *Flipped classroom has become a new focus of educational development. Foreign Trade English Correspondence is a core course for Business English majors, and an important skill for international business talents to master. This paper proposes the teaching design of Flipped classroom for Foreign Trade English Correspondence in view of the teaching problems existing in the current foreign trade English correspondence teaching, such as the single teaching form. This teaching design is based on the Flipped classroom, combining business and English knowledge points. At the same time, according to the teaching content of Foreign Trade English Correspondence, it designs simulated company activities to improve the quality of teachers' teaching and the efficiency of students' learning. This teaching design plays an important role in guiding the teaching of Foreign Trade English Correspondence.*

**Keywords:** *Foreign Trade English Correspondence, Flipped classroom, Teaching design*

## 1. Background

Foreign Trade English Correspondence is a basic skill that international business professionals need to master. It plays a crucial role in successfully conducting business activities by utilizing business knowledge and language skills. As one of the professional courses of Business English, Foreign Trade English Correspondence course requires students to be familiar with foreign trade procedures, master the writing format and principles of business letters, and use English language knowledge, foreign trade related expressions and professional terms. The writing methods and skills of Foreign Trade English Correspondence are also essential skills for Business English majors. In the field of English teaching, flipped classroom teaching provides new ideas and methods, and has become the focus and direction of future English teaching reform. Therefore, the author designs a new flipped classroom teaching model of Foreign Trade English Correspondence to promote the reform of Foreign Trade English Correspondence teaching.

Numerous scholars have conducted different levels of exploration on the teaching of Foreign Trade English Correspondence. Textual errors, syntax error, lexical errors and ontological errors often appear in students' correspondence [1]. Students are lack of solid foreign trade knowledge, unfamiliarity with language expression, lack of learning guidance, received delayed feedback, and with low writing efficiency. These issues affect the teaching quality of Foreign Trade English Correspondence from different levels.

In response to the teaching issues, different scholars have proposed different methods to solve them. By applying the project model into the course of Foreign Trade English Correspondence and combining the theory with curriculum practice, teachers should explore some breakthroughs in their teaching methods and improve effectively students' language ability and communicative competence [2]. Heng and Wang proposed that in the Internet age, optimizing the construction of teaching resources for Foreign Trade English Correspondence courses is the direction of common exploration by teachers [3]. Wang and Wu explored the construction path of a three-dimensional teaching model in the practice of Foreign Trade English Correspondence [4]. Bao and Li proposed the SPOC hybrid teaching mode of "online learning, classroom teaching, online practice", which can effectively promote teaching reform [5]. Hou and Cui claimed that the Foreign Trade English Correspondence course combines the diversified information technology means with the use of blended teaching methods to improve the efficiency and quality of communication skills and enhance students' learning enthusiasm [6]. After scholars' argumentation, it has been proven that project-based learning can improve teaching effectiveness to a certain extent. The application of project-based learning mode in foreign trade correspondence classrooms can improve learning efficiency. First, most of the research focuses on the

traditional education and teaching methods, the idea of improving teaching effects, and does not combine English teaching with business teaching. Therefore, the design of Foreign Trade English Correspondence teaching model based on flipped classroom still needs further exploration.

## **2. The Characteristics of Foreign Trade English Correspondence**

Foreign Trade English Correspondence is a course centered on foreign trade knowledge and skills and based on English application ability. The key to learning Foreign Trade English Correspondence is to achieve smooth international business communication through the study of the style, format, and professional sentences of foreign trade correspondence, which mainly includes content such as establishing business relationships, inquiry, bid, offer and so on. The goal is to cultivate students with business operation abilities. As it involves business knowledge and English teaching, such as professional terminology, Foreign Trade English Correspondence involves the use of specialized terminology related to international trade, such as Incoterms, trade agreements, shipping terms, and customs regulations. Mastery of these terms is essential for effective communication in the field of foreign trade. Second, a formal writing style is important to foreign trade correspondence, it requires a formal writing style that adheres to established formats and conventions. It typically follows a specific structure, including headings, salutations, body paragraphs, and closing remarks. The tone should be professional, concise, and polite. Third, writing business correspondence also requires business knowledge and cultural awareness, for example, negotiation skills, Foreign Trade English Correspondence often involves negotiation and persuasion. Effective communication techniques, such as persuasive language, diplomacy, and negotiation strategies, are important for achieving mutually beneficial outcomes. Another point is that foreign trade involves interactions between individuals from different cultures. Correspondence should consider cultural nuances, etiquette, and sensitivities to maintain positive relationships and avoid misunderstandings. Awareness of cultural differences in language usage and customs helps to build rapport with international partners. Understanding these characteristics is essential for learners of Foreign Trade English Correspondence to develop effective communication skills in the international business arena. Mastery of these traits enables professionals to navigate the complexities of global trade and build successful business relationships. Therefore, the author proposes the teaching design of Foreign Trade English Correspondence based on flipped classroom, which should be targeted to combine the knowledge of the two disciplines.

## **3. Introduction of the flipped classroom**

The flipped classroom is a teaching approach that combines online and in-person learning to enhance student engagement and learning outcomes. In this method, students are assigned readings or online lectures to review outside of class, allowing them to familiarize themselves with the content independently. During class time, they actively participate in problem-solving activities and discussions, guided by their instructor. This approach aims to optimize classroom time for interactive and collaborative learning experiences while utilizing online resources for independent study and knowledge acquisition.

The flipped classroom approach deliberately transforms the traditional teacher-centered instruction to a student-centered model, where students are introduced to new concepts outside the classroom, allowing for more in-depth exploration during class time. This instructional method aims to foster meaningful learning experiences. In a flipped classroom, the delivery of content can take various forms, such as video lessons created by the teacher or external sources, as well as online discussions, digital research, or text readings. Video lessons of around eight to twelve minutes in duration are often considered optimal for this approach [7].

## **4. Design of Flipped Classroom Teaching Mode for Foreign Trade English Correspondence**

Zou pointed out that the construction of the business simulation companies (SC) and results oriented teaching (OBE) teaching model will certainly consolidate and improve the application of students' ability of Business English and can cultivate compound foreign language talents who are "proficient in business skills with English" [8]. Therefore, in this teaching design, each student can establish their own company to write foreign trade correspondence with other students' companies. After the teacher completes the teaching content and sets up specific projects, they begin to write relevant letters and telegrams. This discussion takes the chapter on establishing business relationships

as an example.

#### **4.1 Teaching objectives**

Teaching objectives are established for different content and chapters. Taking establishing business relationships as an example, they can be divided into basic teaching objectives, professional teaching objectives, and practical teaching objectives. The basic teaching objectives include basic terminology and lexical resource, professional English vocabulary and grammar, idiomatic sentence structures, and colloquialism. The professional teaching objectives include the business process of foreign trade, for example, how to establish business relationship with potential partner. The practical teaching objectives aim to cultivate students' practical operation abilities, for instance, format and writing skill of establishing business relationship, cultivating students to use professional vocabulary and sentence structures to write letters and communicate effectively.

#### **4.2 Pre-Class Activities**

*a) Provide students with online resources, such as instructional videos, reading materials, and interactive modules, that cover the key concepts and skills related to Foreign Trade English Correspondence, samples can be seen below.*

*b) Assign pre-class tasks, such as watching videos, reading materials, and completing quizzes, to ensure students have a basic understanding of the topics before coming to class.*

The teacher selects a virtual company related to foreign trade as a teaching case to ensure that it is closely related to the student's learning background and practical application. Provide learning materials and resources necessary for establishing business relationships before class, including textbooks, courseware, relevant reading materials, etc., including background introduction, organizational structure, product information, etc. of virtual companies. Students are required to independently learn and master basic concepts, correspondence formats, and related vocabulary before class. Students independently study the relevant background knowledge and business fields of virtual companies before class, including the basic concepts, formats, and expression skills of foreign trade correspondence. Students can learn about the practical application and business scenarios of foreign trade correspondence through reading materials, watching relevant videos, and other means. Students can watch relevant videos recorded by the teacher in advance, learn letter formats, and phrases and sentence structures involved in business negotiations.

It promotes student engagement and motivation, as learners have a more active role in their education. The pre-class exposure to content allows students to come prepared, leading to more meaningful and focused discussions during class time. Additionally, the flipped classroom provides opportunities for personalized learning, as students can progress at their own pace and receive individualized support.

#### **4.3 In-Class Activities: Collaborative Projects**

*a) In the classroom, the teacher plays the role of a mentor, guiding students to discuss and communicate. Students play roles in a simulated company and are divided into different groups. Each group plays different roles in the simulated company, such as sales manager, procurement manager, logistics manager, etc. Each team performs role-playing tasks such as writing Foreign Trade English Correspondence and responding to simulated company business needs.*

*b) Assign students to small groups and provide them with real-world foreign trade scenarios or business cases. Each group will be responsible for analyzing the scenario, identifying communication objectives, and drafting appropriate correspondence.*

*c) Student groups can collaborate to simulate communication and collaboration within the company, such as collaborating on writing joint letters or conducting role-playing exercises.*

*d) Encourage collaboration and peer-to-peer learning within the groups. Students can exchange ideas, review and edit each other's work, and provide constructive feedback to enhance their understanding and skills.*

*e) Utilize online platforms and tools, such as virtual learning environments or collaboration platforms, to facilitate communication, document sharing, and real-time collaboration among students.*

*f) Incorporate multimedia resources, such as authentic business emails or samples of foreign trade correspondence, to expose students to real-world examples and enhance their understanding of practical applications.*

This flipped classroom Engage students in interactive discussions and activities to deepen their understanding of Foreign Trade English Correspondence. It aims to help students to analyze real-world scenarios and challenges and provide opportunities for students to practice writing foreign trade correspondence through guided exercises and collaborative writing tasks. This also helps to cultivate students' teamwork skills, and communication skills. Meanwhile, teacher can offer immediate feedback and guidance to address their strengths and areas for improvement. The flipped classroom also enhances critical thinking and problem-solving skills. By engaging in active learning activities during class time, students can apply their knowledge to real-world scenarios, collaborate with peers, and develop a deeper understanding of the subject matter. Furthermore, the flipped classroom promotes the development of self-regulated learning skills, as students take responsibility for their own learning and monitor their progress.

#### **4.4 Flipped Assessment**

*a) Implement formative and summative assessments that evaluate students' comprehension and application of Foreign Trade English Correspondence. This can include quizzes, writing assignments, presentations, and group projects.*

*b) Provide individualized feedback and guidance on students' performance, highlighting areas of improvement and offering suggestions for further development.*

Both formative and summative assessments play vital roles in the teaching and learning process. Formative assessments support ongoing monitoring, feedback, and instructional adjustments, while summative assessments provide a comprehensive evaluation and measure of achievement. Students share the problems and solutions they encountered during the correspondence writing process. Students share their draft correspondence and engage in group discussions and interactions, providing feedback and suggestions. Teachers play the role of mentors in the classroom, providing timely feedback and suggestions to students, helping them recognize their strengths and directions for improvement and improve their communication writing skills and abilities. Teachers provide individual guidance and feedback for each group or individual's letter draft, helping students improve their letter writing skills and expression abilities. Teachers can provide individual guidance through correction letters, verbal feedback, and other methods, and provide students with further learning resources and suggestions. For example, homework grading, oral expression or writing evaluation, to evaluate students' learning outcomes and correspondence writing abilities. Both types of assessments contribute to effective instructional practices, student growth, and overall educational improvement.

#### **4.5 Reflection and Review**

*a) Allocate class time for students to reflect on their learning experiences and consolidate their knowledge of Foreign Trade English Correspondence.*

*b) Encourage self-reflection through journals or learning portfolios, where students can document their progress, challenges, and strategies for improvement.*

Teachers and students jointly reflect and evaluate the effect and experience of flipped classroom teaching, and constantly improve and optimize the teaching design and implementation. Teachers can guide students to review their learning gains in simulated company teaching, summarize and reflect, and share their learning experiences, confusion, and experiences. Encourage students to exchange and share experiences, strategies and challenges of correspondence writing in class, so as to promote cooperative learning and experience sharing.

#### **4.6 Homework after class:**

*a) Design homework after class*

Effective homework can consolidate and expand students' knowledge and skills learned in the classroom, carry out writing tasks to establish business relationships, and encourage students to continue self-learning and exploring relevant domain knowledge and resources after class. For example, students need to write a Foreign Trade English Correspondence about establishing business relationship

by themselves.

This teaching design and use can effectively promote teaching reform. The system combines business knowledge and English knowledge and refines them into knowledge fragments. By simulating company scenarios, students can scientifically and systematically master professional knowledge. By simulating the teaching design of a company, students can apply foreign trade correspondence knowledge in real business scenarios, improve practical skills and problem-solving abilities. The flipped classroom teaching mode for Foreign Trade English Correspondence emphasizes active learning, collaboration, and application of knowledge. By providing pre-class materials and activities, students can acquire foundational knowledge independently, allowing class time to focus on practical exercises, discussions, and project-based learning. Assessment and review can help both students and teachers have a deeper understanding of this class. This approach promotes deeper understanding, critical thinking, and the development of effective communication skills in the context of Foreign Trade English Correspondence. The design of Flipped classroom can stimulate students's active learning and participation, promote cooperation and interaction, improve learning effects and practical application ability of correspondence writing skills. There are certain similarities in English language teaching. The Flipped classroom model can be extended to English teaching related courses, such as business writing, translation, etc., so as to improve the quality of Business English teaching and promote teaching reform.

## 5. Conclusion

Flipped classroom is a kind of teaching mode, which transfers the stage of knowledge teaching and understanding in traditional classroom teaching to independent learning before class, while classroom time is used to guide and consolidate students' deep learning and application ability. The Flipped classroom designed in this study plays an important role in guiding the teaching of Foreign Trade English Correspondence. One of the main advantages is that in a simulated company scenario, business and English knowledge can be combined, and knowledge points can be split based on the teaching content of Foreign Trade English Correspondence. The Flipped classroom simulation company teaching mode can enhance students' practical ability, cooperation and collaboration ability, provide real-time feedback and guidance, and promote the application and transfer of knowledge. This teaching mode helps to cultivate students' comprehensive literacy in the field of Foreign Trade English Correspondence, enabling them to better adapt to practical work needs, improve their correspondence writing ability, and prepare for future career development.

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