The Effects of the Flipped Classroom Model on Students' Learning in a College English Class in Shanghai, China

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THE EFFECTS OF THE FLIPPED CLASSROOM MODEL ON STUDENTS’ LEARNING IN A COLLEGE ENGLISH CLASS IN SHANGHAI, CHINA

By

Xiaoying Wei

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THE EFFECTS OF THE FLIPPED CLASSROOM MODEL ON STUDENTS’ LEARNING IN A COLLEGE ENGLISH CLASS IN SHANGHAI, CHINA

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THE EFFECTS OF THE FLIPPED CLASSROOM MODEL ON STUDENTS’ LEARNING IN A COLLEGE ENGLISH CLASS IN SHANGHAI, CHINA

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By

Xiaoying Wei
DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my parents, my son, Chen Moxuan, and the love of my life, Chen Qi. Without their love, understanding and encouragement, I would not have climbed to the top of the mountain.
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THE EFFECTS OF THE FLIPPED CLASSROOM MODEL ON STUDENTS’ LEARNING IN A COLLEGE ENGLISH CLASS IN SHANGHAI, CHINA

Abstract

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2019

For many decades, college English teaching in China has been teacher-centered, mainly focusing on the enhancement of students’ four basic English language skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing, with little attention paid to the cultivation of students’ higher order thinking skills (Tang, 2016; Wang, Xu, & Zhou, 2016). The teacher-centered teaching approach has led to the problem that after having learned English for many years, students cannot speak English fluently (Dai, 2001). There has been a call for promoting the student-centered teaching model in China (NACFLT, 2000). One relatively new approach to support student-centered active learning is flipped instruction (Egbert et al., 2015). In a flipped classroom, the transmission of information in a traditional face-to-face class is moved out of class time, and the class time is devoted to engaging students in active learning to foster deeper understanding of course content and problem-solving skills.

The purpose of this multiple case study was to explore the effects of the flipped classroom model on the learning of Chinese undergraduate students in a college English class. Using a purposeful sampling strategy, I selected a flipped English class in a private college in Shanghai, China, which can be regarded as a pioneer in promoting the flipped classroom model in China. I identified six second-year college students to be my respondents. During the six
weeks of study in the fall semester of 2019, I collected data from multiple sources including one individual semi-structured open-ended interview with the instructor and each of the student participants, classroom observation, and documentation such as the teacher’s teaching plans, students’ journal entries, course projects, word maps and worksheets (both online or written ones). With a holistic analysis of the data collected, I explored students’ perceptions of the learning experiences in the flipped college English class, which lent an insight into the effects of the flipped classroom model on students’ learning.

This study found that the teacher partly flipped her English class. Most of the learning of vocabulary and grammar was moved out of class. The learning of the articles in the textbook was partly flipped, with the initial understanding of the article done before class and the in-depth text analysis carried out in class. In class time, the teacher created an active learning environment with a variety of activities, encouraging students to think and speak English. The flipped learning tasks prepared students for the active learning in class, and the post-class learning tasks engaged students in further learning and thinking. All the six students regarded the teaching model as “original” and “helpful”. They perceived improved learning in the active learning environment in class. In addition, they perceived enhanced autonomy in learning, improvement in their English listening and speaking proficiency, and opportunities for cultivating higher order thinking skills. However, they were also faced with challenges in learning which they attributed to their low proficiency level of English listening and speaking. There was one outlier who preferred the traditional way of teaching and learning English, though he acknowledged the value of the teaching model adopted in this partly flipped English class.

Keywords: flipped classroom model, effects, students’ perceptions of the learning experiences, college English class
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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Since China’s economic reform and open-door policy in 1978, there has been an increasing demand for talents with high English proficiency, and English language education has gained an important position in China (Han, 2008; Li, 2014; Li, 2016). English majors in higher educational institutions have undergone rapid development since then. In 2014, there were altogether 1,145 undergraduate public colleges and universities, among which 994 colleges and universities had developed English majors (Jiang, 2014). Currently, over 1,000 higher educational institutions have established English majors, with over 600,000 English major undergraduate students at school (Zhong, 2015).

Great efforts have been made to promote the development of English majors in higher educational institutions, such as the implementation and revisions of the National College English Teaching Syllabus for English Majors and the development and reform of the Test for English Majors (TEM). However, China is still ranked as a low English proficiency country, which compels educators to improve the way they teach English and offer a student-centered learning environment for students (Li, 2016). The flipped classroom model has been claimed to be an innovative pedagogical approach which fosters students’ active learning (Bergmann & Sams, 2012a; Bergmann & Sams, 2012b; Bergmann & Sams, 2014; Green, 2015; Steed, 2012), so it is now enjoying a growing popularity among the Asian universities (Kvashnina & Martynko, 2016).

This study aimed to inquire into Chinese undergraduate students’ perceptions of their experiences in a flipped college English class in order to better understand the effects of the flipped classroom model on students’ language learning and cultivation of cognitive thinking.
skills. This chapter provided the background information of the study, the statement of the problems, the purpose of the study as well as a brief description of the conceptual framework of the study and the definitions of terms used in the study.

**Background of the Issue**

Higher educational institutions have long been attentive to developing and supporting ways to foster student academic success (McCallum, Schultz, Sellke, & Spartz, 2015). In traditional classrooms, the teacher spends much of class time explaining concepts through lecture, while students listen and take notes which they take home to refer to while working through homework assignments. This teaching model can create “passive learners who may struggle through tasks unassisted” (Egbert, Herman, & Lee, 2015, p. 1). In order to foster student academic success, efforts need to be made to develop effective teaching and learning practices that encourage students to commit time and energy to their educational endeavors (McCallum et al., 2015). Such efforts have been made in college English teaching for English majors in China.

In order to facilitate English teaching for English majors, the Ministry of Education in China issued two syllabuses, i.e. the *English Teaching Syllabus for English Majors at the Foundation Stage* (1989) and the *English Teaching Syllabus for English Majors at the Higher Stage* (1990). In the last decade of the last century, the English teaching for English majors was conducted under the guidance of these two syllabuses and had made great achievements in English talent cultivation. However, although the syllabuses laid much emphasis on skills training, the English teaching was teacher-centered, with teachers dominating the class and giving direct instructions to students. In April, 2000, the Ministry of Education issued the new *National College English Teaching Syllabus for English Majors* in response to the new
requirements for English talents with the development of the market economy in China since 1978 (National Advisory Committee for Foreign Language Teaching, 2000). The new syllabus clearly states that the teacher-centered teaching model in the past should be changed, and that classroom teaching should be student-centered, and pay attention to cultivating students’ learning ability and research ability (NACFLT, 2000).

This call for the shift from a teacher-centered teaching model to a student-center teaching model has caught the attention of many educators who have studied ways to improve students’ learning experience in the English classes (Zeng, 2016; Zhang, 2018). However, most of the English classes are still teacher-centered (Wen & Zhang, 2007), and students’ learning mainly relies on teachers’ offering large amount of understandable language input through lecturing (Dai, 2001). In addition, because of the necessity for English majors to take the Test for English Majors (TEM), which is a criterion-referenced English language test specifically targeted at Chinese university undergraduates majoring in English Language and Literature (Jin & Fan, 2011), teachers often teach vocabulary and grammar in class, offering fewer opportunities for students to engage in learning real-life language skills (Zhang & Luo, 2007; Su, 2012; Song, 2013; Kuang, 2014; Zhao, 2016a; Zhao, 2016b).

The teacher-centered English teaching has led to some problems. The most critical problem is that after having learning English for many years, students cannot speak English fluently (Dai, 2001). Although improvement has been made in students’ English proficiency, China was still ranked as a low English proficiency country at 37th, lagging far behind Malaysia, India and Japan in the 2014 EF EPI report (Li, 2016). In addition, with the traditional teacher-centered teaching approach, the cultivation of students’ higher order thinking skills does not receive due attention. For many decades, English has been taught and learned as a foreign
language for practical use, and “the current English as a foreign language context in Mainland China has been regarded as enhancing students’ four basic English language skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing to improve students’ English proficiency, with scratchy attention paid to the cultivation of students’ proficiency to think critically, to solve dilemmatic situation independently and to lead a healthy life psychologically” (Wang, Xu, & Zhou, 2016, p. 610).

Chinese English learners can utter some English sentences, but lack in-depth ideas and problem-solving ability (Tang, 2016). What has gone wrong with college English education in China? What changes need to be made in order to improve students’ English learning experience? Many educators have reached an agreement that the traditional teacher-centered teaching model should give way to the student-centered one in order to improve students’ English learning experience (Dai, 2001).

One interesting and relatively new approach to support student-centered active learning is flipped instruction (Egbert et al., 2015). Flipped classroom model has caught much attention recently, with its popularity as a Google search term rising exponentially since the inception of the term “flipped classroom” around 2011 (Abeysekera & Dawson, 2015). One of the most common definitions of the flipped approach is “homework is done in class and class work is done at home”, hence the term flipped or inverted classroom, but this definition is claimed to “not quite capture its essence” (Kostka & Lockwood, 2015, p. 2). The flipped classroom is a setting in which teachers offload direct instruction prior to class and use class time to engage students in active learning. The flipped approach occurs when

…direct instruction moves from the group learning space to the individual learning space, and the resulting group space is transformed into a dynamic, interactive learning environment where the educator guides the students as they apply concepts and engage creativity in the subject matter. (Kostka & Lockwood, 2015, p. 2)
In other words, in a flipped classroom, the transmission of information in a traditional face-to-face class is moved out of class time, and the class time is devoted to engaging students in active learning to foster deeper understanding of course content and problem-solving skills. In addition, teachers’ role in class changes from disseminator of knowledge to guide and facilitator in students’ learning.

The flipped classroom model, a teaching approach to foster active learning, is claimed to be “pedagogically sound because it serves the principles of personalized-differentiated learning, student-centered instruction, and constructivism” (Basal, 2015, p. 29). Although research on flipped learning in English language classroom is relatively scarce, a growing amount of work has shown that a flipped approach may foster students’ independent language learning and allows the teacher to differentiate instruction for individual learners (Kostka & Lockwood, 2015). Previous research found that the flipped classroom approach offers great benefits for both the teachers and students in foreign language classrooms, because classroom time can be applied to more interactive tasks and students can learn at their own pace (Basal, 2015; Evseeva & Solozhenko, 2015). The flipped learning approach might improve student motivation and help manage cognitive load (Abeysekera & Dawson, 2015). In addition, students’ academic motivation levels may influence success and satisfaction with the flipped classroom model (Baeten, Kyndt, Struyven, & Filip, 2010; Baeten, Struyven, & Dochy, 2013).

Moreover, the flipped classroom inverts Bloom’s revised taxonomy of educational objectives by moving the lower levels of cognitive work out of the class and focusing on the higher level of cognitive work in class (Hung, 2014; Kvashnina & Martynko, 2016). Bloom’s (1984) taxonomy of educational objectives includes six levels of cognitive thinking, that is, “knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation” (Hung, 2014, p.
and Anderson and Krathwohl (2001) renamed the levels as “remember, understand, apply, analyse, evaluate and create” (Kauffman, 2015, p. 5). The flipped classroom reorganizes the learning process and learning content of a traditional classroom. The original delivery of learning content through in-class lectures that requires lower level of cognitive work (i.e., remembering and understanding) is moved out of class if the flipped classroom model is used. The in-class time is freed and devoted to higher level of cognitive work (i.e., application, analysis, evaluation and creation) with support of peers and guidance from the instructor (Hung, 2014; Kvashnina & Martynko, 2016). In other words, with direct instructions moved out of the classroom for students’ self-paced learning, the flipped classroom engages students in active learning to have their higher level of thinking skills trained in class. In addition, the use of technology in a flipped classroom environment gives students wide access to rich resources and learning material, hence bringing great benefits to students (Tanner & Scott, 2015).

However, Strayer (2012) found that students had difficulty connecting online and face-to-face course components, while Missildine, Fountain, Summers, and Gosselin (2013) found that students were more satisfied with traditional lecture and failed to appreciate the value of interactive learning in the flipped classroom.

O’Flaherty and Phillips’s (2015) review of the literature on the flipped classroom found “very few studies that actually demonstrated robust evidence to support that the flipped learning approach is more effective than conventional teaching methods” (p. 94). This review also found that there was limited published evidence on the effect of the flipped classroom model on student learning outcomes, particularly in higher education, and that the flipped learning approach may not be applicable to all subjects. In addition, O’Flaherty and Phillips (2015) also pointed out that a lack of student engagement in pre-class activities might result in variability of student
preparedness, adding another level to the learning challenges of the already diverse student cohorts. They suggested that further research should be done to provide “stronger evidence in evaluating student learning outcomes that particularly improved student learning and development, as critical thinkers, problems solvers and team players” (O’Flaherty & Phillips, 2015, p. 94). Therefore, in order to better understand the effect of the flipped classroom model on students’ learning, this study attempted to conduct an in-depth case study in an effort to understand how the transition from conventional classroom to flipped classroom affects students’ learning experience in a college English class in a more rigorous way.

**Problem Statement**

The flipped classroom model is getting increasing attention and popularity among educators in China nowadays. Educators from higher educational institutions have begun exploring the efficacy and application of the flipped classroom model. The flipped classroom model has potential in bringing about significant benefits to English language teaching, including an increase in students’ overall performance, enhancement of students’ motivation and improvement of their autonomous learning skills (Kvashnina & Martynko, 2016). One often cited benefit for flipped teaching is that students in the flipped classroom have more opportunities to develop higher order thinking with support from both teacher and peers; this is because the flipped classroom model moves out of class the traditional lectures that often require lower levels of thinking skills in Bloom’s (1984) revised taxonomy of educational objectives, and offers students out-of-class instructional videos, without the cost of sacrificing learning content (Hung, 2014). In addition, flipped classroom model enables teachers to offer personalized student guidance so as to address students’ individual needs (Millard, 2012).
However, there is still need for stronger evidence to support the efficacy of flipped learning approach (O’Flaherty & Phillips, 2015). In addition, most research attention has been devoted to flipped teaching in STEM disciplines (i.e., science, technology, engineering, and mathematics), but “in the field of language education, little or no research to date has rigorously studied whether and how flipping the language classroom can enhance student learning” (Hung, 2014, p. 83). Moreover, although the flipped classroom model is being promoted in college English classes in China, a gap exists in the literature as to the effects of the flipped classroom model on the learning of students in the college English class in China. This study attempted to address this gap by investigating the effects of the flipped classroom model on students’ learning in a college English class.

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this multiple case study was to explore the effects of the flipped classroom model on students’ learning in a college English class in China.

**Research Questions**

*Overarching Research Question:*

What are the effects of the flipped classroom model on the learning of Chinese undergraduate students in a college English class?

*Guiding Research Questions:*

1. In what ways is the teaching of English implemented in a flipped classroom?
2. In what ways do students perceive the ways of constructing knowledge and acquiring language when studying English in a flipped classroom?
3. In what ways do students perceive the opportunities for cultivation of higher order thinking skills in a flipped college English class?
4. In what ways do students perceive the benefits and limitations when studying English in a flipped classroom?
Significance of the Study

This study aimed to fill a gap in the literature by exploring the effects of the flipped classroom model on undergraduates’ learning in a college English class in China. This study was significant for four reasons.

First, it was expected that this study addressing the proposed research questions would help educators to understand students’ perceptions of their learning experiences in a flipped college English class so that they can adjust their teaching practices to better meet students’ needs.

Second, this study would help school administrators or policymakers to understand the efficacy of the flipped classroom model and determine realistic and useful future steps in offering support or training to teachers.

Third, this study offered opportunity for students to have their voice heard regarding their needs and challenges they face in a flipped college English class. Hopefully, students would get more personalized guidance from teachers and improve their learning experience in a flipped English class.

Fourth, this case study would help researchers to gain an insight into the effects of the flipped classroom model on students’ language learning and cultivation of cognitive thinking skills, and discover any gap for future research.

Conceptual Framework

Although there is no specific conceptual framework of the flipped classroom that can be followed by educators, the theoretical basis used to validate the flipped classroom model stems from a substantial body of literature focusing on student-centered learning and active learning. Constructivism is considered to lay the foundation for student-centered learning and active
learning (Khanova, McLaughlin, Rhoney, Roth, & Harris, 2015). “Constructivism views knowledge as dynamically constructed by the learner, who integrates new information with prior knowledge while interacting with other participants and elements of the learning environment” (Khanova et al., 2015, p. 1). It seems that the flipped classroom model is grounded in the constructivist theory of learning, with potential of promoting students’ active learning with cooperation and support with peers and the instructor. The theory underlying the flipped classroom model was further described in Chapter Two.

**Chapter Summary**

Chapter One presented the background information and the importance of conducting a qualitative study on the effects of the flipped classroom model on undergraduate students’ learning in a college English class in China. Its purpose was to gain an in-depth understanding of college students’ perceptions of their learning experiences in a flipped college English class. A deeper understanding of the effects of the active learning in flipped classroom on students’ language learning might not only fill the gap in literature regarding the efficacy of the flipped classroom model, but also give implications for teaching practices in English language education.

**Essential Definitions**

*Active learning*. Active learning is defined as “the process of keeping students mentally, and often physically, active in their learning through activities that involve them in gathering information, thinking, and problem solving” (Michael, 2006, p. 160).

*Bloom’s Taxonomy*. A framework for categorizing educational goals developed by Benjamin Bloom and his collaborators. The original six levels of Bloom’s et al., taxonomy at graduated levels are: knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. Later the
levels were renamed to fit the 21st century student as remember, understand, apply, analyze, evaluate and create (Eber & Parker, 2007).

Constructivism. Constructivism is a theory about how people learn. “Constructivism views knowledge as dynamically constructed by the learner, who integrates new information with prior knowledge while interacting with other participants and elements of the learning environment” (Khanova et al., 2015, p. 1).

Flipped classroom model. A pedagogical approach where “direct instruction moves from the group learning space to the individual learning space, and the resulting group space is transformed into a dynamic, interactive learning environment where the educator guides the students as they apply concepts and engage creativity in the subject matter” (Kostka & Lockwood, 2015, p. 2).

Star Teacher. “Star teacher” is a title conferred upon teachers by the Academic Committee and the Active Learning Classroom Teaching Reform Steering Group in a private college in Shanghai, China. Star teacher candidates should complete the program called the Active Learning Classroom which is aimed to encourage teachers to convert traditional teacher-centered teaching model to student-centered teaching model. Star teachers are selected based on the appraisal of their teaching reform, use of the online teaching system and their academic research on the teaching reform. (Shanghai Normal University Tianhua College, 2018)

Student-centered teaching model. Teachers using the student-centered teaching model “engage students in actively constructing knowledge and they work together to evaluate students learning” (Hamdan, McKnight, McKnight, & Arfstrom, 2013a, p. 7).
Teacher-centered teaching model. Teacher-centered teaching model focuses on “the acquisition of knowledge outside of the context in which it will be used, and instructional delivery includes lecture, homework, and exams, used for assigning grades” (Hamdan, et al., 2013a, p. 7).
CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The twenty-first century has witnessed the growing popularity of English as a widely spoken language across different countries. In China, English has enjoyed a significant position in education since China’s economic reform and open-door policy in 1978 (Han, 2008; Li, 2014; Li, 2016). Since as early as 1985, China has had the largest number of English learners (Cheng, 2008), with an estimated number of more than 200 million English learners in 2003 (Bolton & Graddol, 2012). The number of English learners in China is still growing. From the mid-1990s, English has been made a mandatory school subject from Grade 3 in elementary school to senior high school (Cheng, 2008). All non-English major undergraduate students are required to take the compulsory course of College English (Li, 2016). English majors in higher educational institutions have undergone rapid development since 1978, with over 600,000 English major undergraduate students at school by the end of 2014 (Zhong, 2015).

Regardless of the rapidly growing population of English learners, the overall English learning environment in China is regarded as an acquisition-poor one, where the majority of learners do not have exposure to real-life target language input, and thus lexical knowledge is taken as the building block for any attempt of interacting with the target language (Sorace, 1985; Zhang, 2010). Although reforms have been made in college English education, the dominant pedagogical style has remained to be a teacher-centered, exam-oriented and grammar-translation model (Zhang, 2010). In addition, China is still ranked as a low English proficiency country, which compels educators to improve the way they teach English and offer a student-centered learning environment for students (Li, 2016).
Recognized as a pedagogical innovation that fosters students’ active learning, the flipped classroom model is now enjoying a growing popularity in China’s colleges and universities. The purpose of my study was to understand the effects of the flipped classroom model on students’ learning in a college English class. This chapter provided an overview of the literature regarding the English language education in China and the application of the flipped classroom model in education. In addition, this chapter discussed the conceptual framework of the flipped classroom model used in this research.

**English Language Education in China**

This section provided an overview of the development of the English language education in China. The teaching of English dated back to the 19th century when the Qing Dynasty (1636-1912) was on the decline. With a history of over one and a half century, English language education in China has gone through dramatic changes. This chapter gave an overview of English language education in China. English language education has experienced ups and downs which mirror the social changes taking place in China. Its development has gone through four stages: early English language education from 1862 to 1948, fluctuations from 1949 to 1977, development from 1978 to 2000, and pedagogical innovations in the 21st century.

**Early English Language Education from 1862 to 1948**

The earliest English language education dated back to the 19th century when foreign missionaries, Western Christian missionaries in particular, came to China. Hundreds of missionary schools were set up in both the late Qing Dynasty and the Republic of China period (1912-1949). To preach Christianity in China, Christian missionaries set up schools, given their recognition of the great respect the Chinese held for learning (Wu, 2017a). These schools became appealing to Chinese students and grew rapidly because they introduced new subjects.
such as mathematics, science and foreign languages which were regarded as more useful (Wu, 2017a). The missionary schools developed some basic methods for teaching English, and students learned English mainly through writing and translation practice, reading aloud and recitation (Wang & Zhang, 2017).

However, Wang and Zhang (2017) pointed out that formal public English education did not exist until 1862, when the first government-run foreign language school, Tongwenguan, or the School of Combined Learning (also known as the Imperial College), was founded. Tongwenguan was regarded as a landmark in modern Chinese foreign language education, and its primary aim was to prepare translators for diplomatic services (Wu, 2017a). The teaching of English was characterized by practice through translation in classroom setting. However, in addition to written translation, students in Tongwenguan also practiced oral translation (Wang & Zhang, 2017).

In 1902, Zhang Baixi, the minister in charge of education, drafted a document titled Secondary School Regulations Issued by the Emperor. In 1904, a modern educational system known as the Guimao Educational System was established with the issue of the document titled Secondary School Regulations Approved by the Emperor. It offered guidelines for foreign language education. “Learners should start their practice with pronunciation and vocabulary and then go on to reading, translation, and the writing of simple passages” (Wang & Zhang, 2017, p. 178). Students were also expected to learn grammar through studying original English texts (Wang & Zhang, 2017). English was learned for instrumental purposes during this period, i.e. “to understand the West and acquire Western science and technology” (Wu, 2017a, p.20).

Educational reform was launched in 1912 when the Republic of China was founded. In 1923, the Ministry of Education of the Republic issued the first Chinese curriculum guidelines
titled *Curriculum Outlines for the New School System: Foreign Language Curriculum Outlines for Junior High Schools*. In the Republic of China period, a major method for learning English was reading, with great attention paid to the target language context. During this period, both the Grammar-Translation Method and the Direct Method were popular teaching methods.

Ever since the beginning of the teaching of English, Grammar-Translation Method has been employed. “It focuses on grammatical rules, memorization of vocabulary and of various declensions and conjugations, translations of texts, and doing written exercises” (Li & Yang, 2018). Translation and grammar study were the major teaching and learning activities, with little thought given to teach people how to speak the language. The Grammar-Translation Method was criticized for doing “virtually nothing to enhance a student’s communicative ability in the language” (Li & Yang, 2018, p. 15). In opposition to the Grammar-Translation Method, the Direct Method was developed in the late 19th century. The Direct Method emphasized the use of the target language in class and the inductive teaching of grammar (Li & Yang, 2018). During this first stage of English language education in China, the direct method was adopted mostly in missionary schools in some large and medium-sized cities, while the Grammar-Translation Method was more popular in inland cities and rural areas in China.

**Fluctuations from 1949 to 1977**

English language education in China has gone through fluctuations in relation to changes of political and economic policies since foundation of the People’s Republic of China in 1949. Due to the Soviet influence and the chilled Sino-American relations during the Cold War period, English language teaching did not enjoy much attention from 1949 to 1977, and came to a halt because of a political and ideological movement called “Cultural Revolution” which lasted ten years from May 1966 to October 1976 (Han, 2008).
In 1950, the People’s Republic of China formed an alliance with the former Soviet Union by signing the Sino-Soviet Treaty of Friendship, Alliance and Mutual Assistance. With the financial aid and technological support from this strategic socialist partner, China began to implement its first Five-year Plan (1953-1957) to develop the nation’s economy. During the years that followed, there was a politically motivated craze for learning Russian as a foreign language. Moreover, due to the chilled Sino-American relations at that time, English language education in China gave way to the teaching of Russian. Foreign language teaching of both Russian and English during these years was under the influence of Russian pedagogy, in particular the conscious contrast method developed in the former Soviet Union. This method “emphasized the importance of grammar, elucidated the contrasts between the mother tongue and target language when presenting new content, prioritized reading over all other skills, and taught by means of a set sequence of words, phrases and finally sentences” (Wang & Zhang, 2017, p. 179). This teaching approach was teacher-centered, classroom-centered and textbook-centered, with the teacher imparting knowledge and students taking in knowledge passively (Wang & Zhang, 2017).

The year of 1956 witnessed great changes in China’s social and political life. At a national conference in January, 1956, Premier Zhou Enlai highlighted the significance of “promoting science and culture” in response to the nation’s goals for modernization (Wu, 2017b). It was until that time that the importance of English in providing access to science and technology from the west was acknowledged by the central government. On July 10th, 1956, China’s Ministry of Education issued an announcement regarding foreign language teaching in secondary schools:

To meet the needs for socialist economic development, foreign language teaching in secondary schools should be expanded and strengthened. English will be part of the
senior high school curriculum … Starting in the autumn semester, 1956, foreign languages will be resumed in junior high schools ... The ratio of English to Russian will be 50:50. (Wu, 2017b, p. 40)

This announcement indicated the recognition of equal importance of English to that of Russian in foreign language education. During the period from 1958 to 1966, there was a dramatic change in foreign language preference. Due to the split of Sino-Soviet tie, and the increased international relations between China and the western countries, English replaced Russian to be the more favored foreign language in China (Wang & Zhang, 2017). In 1963, the Ministry of Education issued a new English syllabus which offered guidelines for the teaching of English speaking, listening, reading and writing skills. “The syllabus also included methods for teaching good pronunciation and for integrating reading, reciting, sentence-making, conversation, and composition” (Wang & Zhang, 2017, p. 180). During the 1960s and the early 1970s, the classroom instruction of college English employed the Grammar-Translation Method, a foreign language teaching approach which requires that students translate learning materials word for word and memorize grammatical rules and exceptions as well as vocabulary lists (Han, 2008; Asl & Noor, 2015). During this period, the Audio-Lingual Method was introduced to China. The Audio-Lingual Method attached importance to the teaching of listening and speaking, and it “uses dialogues as the main form of language presentation and drills as the main training techniques” (Li & Yang, 2018, p. 21). However, the classroom teaching was not affected much by this method during that period (Wang & Zhang, 2017).

Unfortunately, the English language education, along with most other education, was interrupted and discouraged during the Cultural Revolution which lasted ten years from May 1966 to 1976. “The only ‘cry in the wilderness’ came from former Premier Zhou Enlai, who realized far too well that learning foreign language is a continuous process that, once suspended, would take years to recover” (Wu, 2017b, p.45).
Development from 1978 to 2000

The termination of the Cultural Revolution led China into a new era of economic development. In 1978, China’s economic reform and open-door policy was put into practice. Since then, China has been in needs of a tremendous talent pool capable of participating in international affairs and competitions in English; under such circumstances, English language education has gained an important position and enjoyed great favor and fervor in China (Han, 2008; Li, 2014; Li, 2016).

In 1978, the Ministry of Education issued a new English syllabus, *English Syllabus for Full-Time 10 Year Primary and Secondary Schools (Trial draft)*, which “emphasized the development of reading ability and independent learning skills” (Wang & Zhang, 2017, p.181). This syllabus, together with its amended version in 1980, marked the start of “a utilitarian era that emphasized the teaching of English skills in addition to the traditional emphasis on pronunciation, grammar and vocabulary” (Wang & Zhang, 2017, p.182). During this period, great attention was drawn to the exploration of language teaching methods. In 1979, a document titled *The Guidelines for Strengthening Foreign Language Education* was issued, and it “further stressed the importance of researching and developing effective teaching methods” (Wang & Zhang, 2017, p.181). Scholars and educators started to introduce Western pedagogies to English teachers in China. Among these were the Direct Method, the Audio-Lingual Method, and Communicative Language Teaching method. Foreign language teaching between 1978 and 1985 mainly followed a blend of the Grammar-Translation Method and the Audio-Lingual Method, while the Communicative Language Teaching method enjoyed little popularity in China (Wang & Zhang, 2017). From the mid-1980s to the mid-1990s, Chinese educators actively engaged themselves in experimenting with various methods based on different teaching contexts (Wang
In the early 1990s, the Communicative Language Teaching method was formally introduced into schools by the State Education Commission which issued two syllabi: *The English Syllabus for Full-Time Junior High Schools in Nine-Year Compulsory education (Trial Edition) (1992)* and *The English Syllabus for Full-Time Senior High Schools (Initially Approved Edition) (1993)* (Wang & Zhang, 2017). These two syllabi pointed out that the purpose of the English teaching was to enable students to communicate in English. Accordingly, efforts were made to promote the communicative language teaching approach among teachers. For instance, new sets of textbooks were compiled and published to spread the ideas of communicative language teaching among English teachers. However, classroom teaching during this period still continued to be teacher-centered (Wang & Zhang, 2017).

It is worthwhile to get a glimpse into the English education for English majors during this period. English majors in higher educational institutions have undergone rapid development since 1978. The initial steps in the development of English majors were difficult: there was no standard English curriculum guiding English teaching and even no textbooks in the late 1970s (Hu, 2008). In 1980, the Ministry of Education established a national committee for compiling and reviewing textbooks for foreign language majors in higher educational institutions. The committee was also responsible for writing the English teaching syllabus for English majors and two syllabuses were issued, i.e. the *English Teaching Syllabus for English Majors at the Foundation Stage (1989)* and the *English Teaching Syllabus for English Majors at the Higher Stage (1990)*. With the guidance of the syllabuses and the textbooks recommended or compiled by the committee, the English education for English majors was getting on track (He, Huang, Qin, & Chen, 2008). However, the grammar-translation method or the audiolingual approach
were the primary teaching methods, which rigidly enforced “teacher-as-dominant and student-as-submissive role relationships” (Han, 2008, p. 9).

In order to measure English major students’ English proficiency and to examine whether students meet the required level of English language abilities as specified in the national English teaching syllabuses for English majors, Tests for English Majors (TEMs) were officially launched in 1992 (Jin & Fan, 2011). Since the four-year English major undergraduate program is divided into the foundation stage (the first and second year) and the advanced stage (the third and fourth year), the TEM test battery correspondingly consists of two levels, i.e. TEM 4, assessing students’ English proficiency at the end of the foundation stage, and TEM 8, assessing students’ English proficiency at the advanced stage. The implementation of TEMs has highly motivated students to learn English, but it has also brought about some negative effects on students’ English learning, leading students to focus on the grasp of linguistic knowledge while ignoring the cultivation of real-life language skills (Su, 2013). Some colleges and universities require that students should not be conferred the bachelor’s degree if they do not pass the TEM 4, and such a mandate could lead to overly test-oriented English teaching and learning (Jin & Fan, 2011; Chen, 2016).

In 1990s, the reform in English education for English majors focused on how English majors could best serve the needs of the economic development of the country (He et al., 2008). The development of the socialist market economy demands English talents with not only high English proficiency but also expertise in fields other than the English language (Hu, 2008; He et al., 2008). In order to meet the new requirements for English talents, the Ministry of Education issued the new *National College English Teaching Syllabus for English Majors* in April, 2000 (NACFLT, 2000). Compared with the two old syllabuses, the new syllabus emphasizes the
cultivation of students’ capabilities of learning, applying knowledge, analyzing and solving problems independently, and innovating (He et al., 2008). What’s more, the new syllabus clearly states that the teacher-centered teaching model in the past should be changed, and that classroom teaching should be student-centered, and pay attention to cultivating students’ learning ability and research ability (NACFLT, 2000). The issue of this new syllabus was followed by a new stage of development of the English language education in the 21st century.

**Innovations of English Teaching Methods in the Twenty-First Century**

The twenty-first century witnesses the rapid growth and development of China’s economy and technology. In order to address the country’s needs for communication with the international community, the government felt obliged to improve the foreign language teaching curricula for schools. A nationwide reform focusing on curriculum innovation was launched by the Ministry of Education to promote quality-oriented education. The country’s English curriculum was revised. “The new curriculum standards advocated major changes in English language teaching methods, including an emphasis on student-centered teaching and increased focus on autonomous learning, cooperative learning, inquiry-based learning, and learning by doing” (Wang & Zhang, 2017, p. 184).

In response to the call for a shift to student-centered teaching, attempts have been made to improve students’ learning experience in the English classes with student-centered teaching (Zeng, 2016; Zhang, 2018). For example, the task-based language teaching, also called task-based instruction, was advocated in the new *English Curriculum Standards for Full-Time Compulsory Education and Senior High Schools (Experimented Edition)* published in 2001. Task-based language teaching (TBLT) is “an approach based on the use of tasks as the core unit of planning and instruction in language teaching” (as cited in Wang & Zhang, 2017, p. 210).
This teaching approach focuses on “the authentic use of language for meaningful communicative purposes beyond the language classroom” (Li & Yang, 2018, p. 96). Since its introduction to China in the 1990s, the task-based language teaching approach has been growing in popularity among English teachers. However, this teaching approach has faced challenges, for researchers has argued about whether this teaching approach can serve English language teaching well in China. Task-based language teaching was regarded as a Western teaching method. “It is not beneficial for the innovation of methodology simply to duplicate Western methodology; only research which is based on some specific situations bears any permanent and general significance” (as cited in Wang & Zhang, 2017, p. 211).

Due to the increasing debate over the use of task-based language teaching in China, the Ministry of Education’s 2011 edition of the English curriculum standards modified its reference to this teaching approach: “Teachers should create various real-life contexts … adopt a variety of approaches and methods which stress both process and product, such as TBLT” (as cited in Wang & Zhang, 2017, p. 211). This modification delivered the message that teachers could select and synthesize various methods to create their own teaching methods which were most appropriate for their own teaching context and for the particular students they taught (Wang & Zhang, 2017). There was an awareness among researchers and teachers that “a teaching method, however effective it is claimed to be, could not be blindly borrowed” (Cheng & Xie, 2017, p. 327).

Despite the efforts made to innovate English teaching method, most of the English classes are still teacher-centered (Wen & Zhang, 2007), and students’ learning mainly relies on teachers’ offering large amount of understandable language input through lecturing (Dai, 2001). The teacher-centered teaching model has been a primary teaching approach in college English
class. Teacher-centered teaching model focuses on “the acquisition of knowledge outside of the context in which it will be used, and instructional delivery includes lecture, homework, and exams, used for assigning grades” (Hamdan et al., 2013a, p. 7). In teacher-centered English class, teachers give direct instructions to students regarding grammar and vocabulary, and students take notes for memorization while enjoying fewer chances to practice real-life language skills in class (Zhao, 2012). The traditional teacher-centered teaching approach has given rise to some problems. For many decades, the English language education in China has mainly focused on enhancing students’ four basic English language skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing, with little attention paid to the cultivation of students’ critical thinking and problem-solving ability (Wang et al., 2016). Tang (2016) points out that “Chinese college students can speak out some sentences but lack in-depth ideas and practical ability to solve problems. They suffer from emotional literacy” (p.18).

Currently, a national document for English majors, *National Standards of Teaching Quality for Undergraduate English Majors* (hereafter named NSTQUEM), is in the process of completion by the Ministry of Education in China. “NSTQUEM emphasizes that we should not only attach importance to foster English professionals of cross-cultural communicative competence and sustainable study ability but embody the cultivation of creativity, practical ability, and critical thinking competence” (Wang et al., 2016, p. 211). The communicative competence and higher order thinking skills are rarely achieved in traditional teacher-centered classrooms.

Flipped classroom model, a teaching approach to foster active learning, offers a possible way to transform the traditional teacher-centered classroom into a student-centered classroom. The following section reviewed literature regarding the flipped classroom model.
Flipped Classroom

Flipped classroom model is emerging as a relatively new pedagogical innovation that involves flipping the traditional approach of classroom instruction to foster students’ active learning (Bergmann & Sams, 2012a; Bergmann & Sams, 2012b; Bergmann & Sams, 2014; Green, 2015; Steed, 2012). Flipped classroom model was first widely embraced and adopted by the American and European pedagogical communities and is now growing in its popularity among the Asian universities (Kvashnina & Martynko, 2016). This section gave an overview of the flipped classroom model in terms of its founders, definition, its relation to active learning, its application in education and its relation to Bloom’s taxonomy.

Founders of the Flipped Classroom

Just as the name indicates, the flipped classroom model turns traditional education upside down. The traditional in-class lectures and out-of-class homework are reversed. Teachers shift their roles from disseminator of knowledge to facilitator, coach, and guide. The “sage on stage” is changed into the “guide on the side” (Hussain, Ahmad, Saeed, & Khan, 2015). How did this pedagogical approach appear? The flipped classroom model has attracted much attention in the past few years; however, no one particular person or persons have been identified as the founder of this pedagogical approach. This section addresses some of the people who are linked to the rising of the flipped classroom model.

The flipped classroom model may be traced back to 1982 with Baker as he had a vision of using electronic means to cover his learning material outside of class (Baker, 2000). This model has been used for years in some disciplines. In 1998, Barbara Walvoord and Virginia Johnson Anderson promoted this pedagogy in their book entitled Effective Grading. In this book, they proposed a pedagogical approach in which “students gain first-exposure learning
prior to class and focus on the processing part of learning (synthesizing, analyzing, problem-solving, etc.) in class” (Brame, 2013).

Lage, Platt, and Treglia (2000) adopted a similar approach in an introductory economics course at the University of Miami. In response to the observation that the traditional lectures were incompatible with some learning styles, they designed an inverted classroom in which they offered students a variety of tools to gain exposure to learning materials before class, such as textbook reading materials, lecture videos, PowerPoint presentations with voice-over, and printable PowerPoint slides (Brame, 2013). In addition, they used worksheets to help ensure student preparation before class, and then devoted class time to activities that encourage students to apply economics principles (Lage, Platt, & Treglia, 2000).

Eric Mazur and Catherine Crouch adopted a similar model that they termed peer instruction (Brame, 2013). With the peer instruction model, they used quizzes to ensure that students came to class prepared, and class time was structured around alternating mini-lectures and conceptual questions (Brame, 2013). Students worked on the conceptual questions with peers’ help and the teacher’s guidance (Brame, 2013).

Salman Khan, the founder of the well-known Khan Academy, was a great contributor to the development of the flipped classroom. In 2004, Salman Khan created a new teaching method when he remotely tutored one of his cousins in math. He used Yahoo Doodle Images which enabled him to tutor his cousin interactively. When word got around about the academic achievements made by the cousin because of Salman Khan’s tutoring, more cousins began to take advantage of the interactive remote tutoring. To improve the effectiveness of his tutoring, Salman Khan transitioned to making You Tube video tutorials. The videos he posted online soon received high recognitions from learners who happened to watch his videos. In 2006,
Salman Khan founded a non-profit educational organization, the Khan Academy, with the idea of “providing a high quality education to anyone, anywhere” (Zhang, 2015, p.16). Khan Academy has achieved great success, with over 1.63 million subscribers from all over the world by January 2014 (Zhang, 2015).

Finally, and most recently, two widely recognized pioneers of the flipped classroom model are Jonathan Bergmann and Aaron Sams, two chemistry teachers in a rural high school in Colorado. Concerned that students involved in sports or other school activities missed a lot of class time, they sought for solutions, and in 2007, they began recording their lectures and turned them into video presentations with screencasting software (Hamdan, McKnight, McKnight, & Arfstrom, 2013b). Those teaching materials were then posted on YouTube for students to access. Bergmann and Sams (2012b) later reported that after they flipped their classroom, time could be used more flexibly, and students began interacting more in class. Bergmann and Sams (2012b) clearly stated that they were not the first educators to use videos in the classroom as an instructional tool, but were early outspoken proponents of using the tool to enhance students’ learning.

**Definition**

While the terms “flip teaching” and “flipped classroom” are relatively new in education, it is not a fundamentally novel teaching approach (Berrett, 2012; Davies, Dean, & Ball, 2013). Over the past decade, a couple of terms such as inverted classroom, just-in-time teaching, flipped classroom, and inverted learning have been presented in the literature to describe this approach that inverted the traditional in-class lectures and out-of-class homework (Fulton, 2012; Hung, 2015). The flipped classroom model has gained great popularity due to advances in technology and increased easy access to computers and other mobile devices (Davies et al., 2013).
There is no single widely agreed definition of the flipped classroom model as the approach varies from teacher to teacher. One of the most common definitions of the flipped approach is “homework is done in class and class work is done at home”, but this definition is claimed to “not quite capture its essence” (Kostka & Lockwood, 2015, p. 2). Moving direct instruction out of class is “a great place to begin your journey, but it is not the destination itself” (Bergmann & Sams, 2014, p. 20).

Abeysekera and Dawson (2015) defined the flipped classroom model as:

a set of pedagogical approaches that: (1) move most information-transmission teaching out of class; (2) use class time for learning activities that are active and social; and (3) require students to complete pre- and/or post-class activities to fully benefit from in-class work. (p. 3)

They claimed that their definition is the superset of other definitions of the flipped classroom model, because their definition did not include claims about the positive effects of the flipped classroom model, condemnation of existing teaching approaches, assumptions about the implementers’ motivations and specification of technologies to be used (Abeysekera & Dawson, 2015).

Bergmann and Sams (2012a) are credited with pioneering the flipped classroom model in classroom setting. They preferred the definition given by the Flipped Learning Network:

Flipped learning is a pedagogical approach in which direct instruction moves from the group learning space to the individual learning space, and the resulting group space is transformed into a dynamic, interactive learning environment where the educator guides students as they apply concepts and engage creatively in the subject matter. (Bergmann & Sams, 2014, p. 20)

Despite various definitions, the basic idea of the flipped classroom is that with direct instructions known as lecture moved out of the class for self-paced learning in individual space, the face-to-face class time is freed up for more active and meaningful learning experiences for
students. This study adopted the definition given by the Flipped Learning Network as the working definition of flipped classroom.

**Flipped Classroom and Active Learning**

Flipped classroom has gained its popularity because of its potential for leading to students’ active learning. Active learning is defined as “the process of having students engage in some activity that forces them to reflect upon ideas and how they are using those ideas” and “the process of keeping students mentally, and often physically, active in their learning through activities that involve them in gathering information, thinking, and problem solving” (Michael, 2006, p. 160). This definition links active learning to a vast range of learning activities, including group discussions, case studies, collaborative learning, problem-based learning and inquiry-based learning (Hung, 2015). Many of the learning difficulties experienced by students in undergraduate courses are said to be caused by students’ passive role in traditional lectures, and active learning is regarded as a remedy (Andrews, Leonard, Colgrove, & Kalinowski, 2011). There is much support for active learning with evidence in literature that it leads to improved learning (Abeysekera & Dawson, 2015; Andrews et al., 2011). Students learn better when they are participating actively in learning activity than when they are passively receiving a presentation of knowledge (Brown, 2012). Active learning is associated with increased student learning and improved student academic performance (Michael, 2006), and increased student engagement, critical thinking, and better attitudes toward learning (Gilboy, Heinerischs, & Pazzaglia, 2015; O'Dowd & Aguilar-Roca, 2009; Hamdan, McKnight, McKnight, & Arfstrom, 2013a).

By moving traditional lectures out of the class for students’ self-paced learning, the flipped classroom approach offers students more opportunities to engage in active learning in
groups with support from both peers and the instructor in class (Berrett, 2012; Bergmann & Sams, 2012a; Bergmann & Sams, 2012b; Bergmann & Sams, 2014; Plunkett, 2014; Strayer, 2012). The flipped classroom model transforms the traditional teacher-centered classroom into a student-centered classroom, with students and their learning needs at the center of active learning. With more time to work with students during class, teachers can remediate or re-teach concepts in small groups or with individual students, hence addressing different individual students’ needs (Bergmann & Sams, 2012b). In the flipped classroom, teachers are not mere disseminators of knowledge; instead, they serve as a coach, guide, collaborator and facilitator in students’ learning (Bergmann & Sams, 2012b; Plunkett, 2014).

Effects of the Flipped Classroom on Students’ Learning

As a relatively new teaching method that promotes student-centered active learning, the flipped classroom model is claimed to be “pedagogically sound because it serves the principles of personalized-differentiated learning, student-centered instruction, and constructivism” (Basal, 2015, p. 29). An increasing number of studies on the flipped classroom model demonstrate its growing popularity. The most common types of studies conducted on the flipped classroom examine students’ perceptions of the model with the use of surveys or interviews to investigate students’ satisfaction with the model. Studies on student perceptions about the flipped classroom model have been overwhelmingly positive, with a majority of students reporting preference and usefulness of the flipped classroom approach (Webb, Doman, & Pusey, 2014). A literature review study was conducted based on 20 articles on flipped classroom from 2013-2015, and the findings revealed that the flipped classroom model contributed to students’ academic achievement, enhanced students’ motivation and engagement in learning, and led to more interactions with peers and the instructor (Zainuddin & Halili, 2016).
Previous research found that the flipped classroom approach offers great benefits for both the teachers and students in foreign language classrooms, because classroom time can be applied to more interactive tasks and students can learn at their own pace (Basal, 2015; Evseeva & Solozhenko, 2015). Yu and Wang (2016) collected both qualitative and quantitative data to explore the effectiveness of the flipped classroom model in business English writing course. Their study reported better academic achievements and higher rate of satisfaction of the students in a flipped classroom than those of students in a traditional classroom (Yu & Wang, 2016).

However, challenges also exist in the flipped classroom approach. Kim, Kim, Khera and Getman (2014) found no evidence that flipped learning had improved students’ grades. Students, especially part-time students had difficulty adapting to the flipped classroom model for they did not have enough time to watch the video lesson outside the class (Chen, Wang, & Chen, 2014). Strayer (2012) found that students had difficulty connecting online and face-to-face course components, while Missildine, Fountain, Summers, and Gosselin (2013) found that students were more satisfied with traditional lecture and failed to appreciate the value of interactive learning in the flipped classroom. What is more, poor quality of video was found to be a common problem in flipped classroom practice (Milman, 2012), and if a video was not attractively made and designed, students would lose interest in watching it outside the class (Enfield, 2013). Bergmann and Sams (2014) also held that “boring lectures are bad, but boring lectures on a video can be even worse” (p. 21). They argued that what counts in flipped learning is “not just about using video as a direct instruction delivery tool”, but about maximizing class time for deeper student engagement in meaningful learning experience for students (Bergmann & Sams, 2014, p. 21).
To explore the efficacy of the flipped classroom model, Smith (2015) conducted a mixed-methods research case study, comparing two flipped math classrooms and two traditional math classrooms in fifth-grade. The findings of his study indicated no improvement in student achievement with a flipped learning model. Moreover, students in the traditional classrooms had a higher homework completion rate compared with the students in the flipped classroom. The findings also showed that students were more actively engaged in learning in a flipped classroom than in a traditional one. However, students in a flipped classroom reported that they were trouble by technological issues at home. Smith (2015) also pointed out that “students who are not self-motivated and responsible for their own learning are more likely to struggle in a flipped classroom” (p. iv).

Similarly, O’Flaherty and Phillips (2015) also pointed out that a lack of student engagement in pre-class activities might result in variability of student preparedness, adding another level to the learning challenges of the already diverse student cohorts. They suggested that further research should be conducted to provide “stronger evidence in evaluating student learning outcomes that particularly improved student learning and development, as critical thinkers, problems solvers and team players” (O’Flaherty & Phillips, 2015, p. 94).

**Flipped Classroom and Bloom’s Taxonomy**

Bloom’s taxonomy is a tool that help educators broaden the depth of their students’ learning. This section described Bloom’s taxonomy and discusses how the flipped classroom model inverts the taxonomy to help students reach higher order thinking skills in the classroom.

Bloom’s (1984) taxonomy of educational objectives includes six levels of cognitive thinking, i.e., “knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation” (Hung, 2015, p. 82), and Anderson and Krathwohl (2001) renamed the levels as “remember,
understand, apply, analyse, evaluate and create” (Kauffman, 2015, p. 5). The explanation is arranged from the lowest level to the highest level.

Remember. This level involves retrieving information from memory, known as rote memory. Learning at this level builds a foundation for the remaining levels of cognition. It involves learning facts, knowledge of major ideas, and memorizing.

Understand. When incoming knowledge is integrated with existing cognitive frameworks, this level has been achieved. Cognitive processes in this level include interpreting, illustrating, classifying, summarizing, and comparing.

Apply. This level consists of two cognitive processes. The first is executing, which is when the task is an exercise familiar to the learner. The second is implementation, which occurs when the learner is unfamiliar with the problem.

Analyze. This level involves breaking material into its constituent parts and determining how the parts are related to each other and to an overall structure. This level includes debating, organizing, and attributing.

Evaluate. In order to master this level, students must make judgments based on criteria and standards. This phase includes monitoring, testing, judging, pointing out consistencies, and utilizing critical thinking.

Create. This final level requires students to put together elements to form a coherent or functional whole. Students produce a product by implementing three parts: 1) Students understand the task and generate solutions; 2) The student devises a workable plan; 3) The student carries out the plan. (Eber & Parker, 2007, p. 46)

In a flipped classroom, the six levels of cognitive skills in Bloom’s taxonomy are inverted. The original delivery of learning content through in-class lectures that requires lower level of cognitive work (i.e. remembering and understanding) is moved out of class if the flipped classroom model is used; the in-class time is then freed and devoted to higher level of cognitive work (i.e. applying, analyzing, evaluating and creating) with support of peers and guidance from the instructor (Bergmann & Sams, 2012b; Hung, 2015; Kvashnina & Martynko, 2016; Zainuddin & Halili, 2016).

The following Figure 1, an image shown by Beth Williams at the NNNC Conference in Norfolk in 2013, illustrates the levels of cognitive skills involved in students’ learning in a flipped classroom versus those in a traditional classroom. In traditional classroom, teachers introduce new learning materials to students by lecturing in class, and students are involved in the learning that involves lower level of cognitive work, i.e. remembering and understanding.
After class, students do homework alone which may entail their use of higher level of cognitive work. In contrast, in a flipped classroom, with the direct instruction of the course content moved out of the classroom, students can practice the lowest levels of cognitive skills, namely, remembering and understanding, at their own pace with learning materials or videos offered by the teacher. In the class time, students are engaged in higher levels of learning with guidance from the teacher and collaboration and support from their peers.

![Bloom's Taxonomy](image)

_Figure 1._ An Image Shown by Beth Williams at NNNC Conference at Norfolk, NE. (as cited in Zhang & Liu, 2016, p.139)

**Conceptual Framework**

Although there is no specific conceptual framework of the flipped classroom that can be followed by educators, the theoretical basis used to validate the flipped classroom model stems from a substantial body of literature focusing on student-centered learning and active learning.
Student-centered learning and active learning offer more opportunities for students to develop higher-order thinking skills. This section discussed the conceptual framework that underlies the flipped classroom model.

Recognized as a pedagogical approach to student-centered learning and active learning, the flipped classroom model is grounded in constructivism, a theory based on the work of Jean Piaget and Lev Vygotsky, for constructivism is considered to lay the foundation for student-centered learning and active learning (Khanova, McLaughlin, Rhoney, Roth, & Harris, 2015; Lumpkin & Achen, 2015).

“Constructivism views knowledge as dynamically constructed by the learner, who integrates new information with prior knowledge while interacting with other participants and elements of the learning environment” (Khanova et al., 2015, p. 1). Based on the constructivist learning theory, students should be active agents in their learning rather than passive knowledge-recipients. Instead of passively receiving knowledge delivered by teachers, students actively explore, experiment, question and reflect on real-world problems, which leads to deep understanding; and moreover, students learn how to learn by engaging in these activities (Grant, 2013).

It is critiqued that constructivism overlooks the role social interaction plays in learning (Lumpkin & Achen, 2015). Lev Vygotsky’s social constructivism theory addresses this aspect. Social constructivism is “a student-centered learning theory that emphasizes the social contexts and social environments within which individuals learn” (Green, 2015, p.182). In social constructivism, students are regarded as an active agent who engage in a series of hands-on task-based activities that emphasize active learning among social interactions with peers, while teachers play a deemphasized, facilitative, rather than instructive role (Green, 2015). It seems
that social constructivism underlies the shift of roles of students and the teacher in a flipped classroom. In a flipped classroom, students’ role shifts from a passive knowledge-recipient to an active learning agent, while teachers’ role changes from a disseminator of knowledge to a coach, guide, collaborator and facilitator in students’ learning.

In addition, a central tenet of Vygotsky’s social constructivism theory is the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). The ZPD refers to “the difference between the actual developmental level of a learner as determined through problem-solving tasks and the level of a learner’s potential academic achievement as determined through problem solving under instructed guidance and/or collaboration with peers” (Green, 2015, p.182). Vygotsky’s theory suggests that the teacher or facilitator incorporate effective scaffolding in class to assist students in obtaining and retaining information (Green, 2015). Scaffolding is “an education-specific aspect of best practices in pedagogy that ensures that learners are sufficiently supported in the learning process to bridge the gaps in their knowledge between what is known and what is unfamiliar in terms of course content” (Green, 2015, p.182). With the adoption of the flipped classroom model, such scaffolding is introduced into the classroom. The teacher as facilitator supports students’ learning of course content by providing suitable activities with appropriate level of difficulty and complexity, assisting and guiding students’ learning and encouraging peer instruction and support.

Grounded in the social constructivism theory, the flipped classroom model provides a more interactive, active, student-centered learning environment for students.

Chapter Summary

This chapter conducted a review of the literature regarding English language education in China and the application of flipped classroom model in education. Additionally, this chapter
discussed the conceptual framework of the flipped classroom model used in this research. Through this literature review, this chapter concluded that the flipped classroom model is a potential alternative approach to transform the traditional teacher-centered classroom into a student-centered classroom that fosters students’ active learning. Although English educators in China are aware of the necessity to reform English teaching, English class is still more teacher-centered. Teachers spend most of the class time giving direct instructions of course content, while students enjoy fewer chances to practice real-life language skills and higher order thinking skills in class. Therefore, the flipped classroom model may serve as an alternative teaching approach to promote active learning in the English class for English majors in China.

A review of previous studies on flipped classroom also gave implications for further research. O’Flaherty and Phillips’s (2015) review of the literature on the flipped classroom found “very few studies that actually demonstrated robust evidence to support that the flipped learning approach is more effective than conventional teaching methods” (p. 94). This review also found that there was limited published evidence on the effect of the flipped classroom model on student learning outcomes, particularly in higher education and that the flipped learning approach may not be applicable to all subjects. O’Flaherty and Phillips (2015) suggested that further research should be done to provide “stronger evidence in evaluating student learning outcomes that particularly improved student learning and development, as critical thinkers, problems solvers and team players” (p. 94). Zainuddin and Halili (2016) recommended that future flipped classroom studies use a variety of designs such as experimental research, case study and ethnography, and that future flipped classroom studies be extend from science studies to social studies such as foreign language classes, English, history, physical education, drama class and humanities.
Although research on flipped learning in English language learning is relatively scarce, a growing amount of work has shown that a flipped approach may foster students’ independent language learning and allows the teacher to differentiate instruction for individual learners (Kostka & Lockwood, 2015). In addition, students in the flipped classroom have more opportunities to develop higher order thinking with support from both teacher and peers (Hung, 2015). However, there is still need for stronger evidence to support the efficacy of flipped learning approach (O’Flaherty & Phillips, 2015). Moreover, little or no research to date has rigorously investigated the effects of the flipped classroom model on students’ language learning (Hung, 2015). Therefore, a gap exists in the literature as to the efficacy of the flipped classroom model in language class. This study attempted to address this gap by investigating the effects of the flipped classroom model on students’ learning in a college English class in China.
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to gain an in-depth understanding of the effects of the flipped classroom model on students’ learning in a college English class in China. For this purpose of study, I adopted a multiple case study design to explore students’ experiences in a flipped English class delivered by an instructor who had been honored the rank of “star teacher” in promoting students’ active learning by flipping the class in a private college in the Eastern part of China. Investigating students’ experiences in a flipped college English class may help elucidate the role of the flipped classroom model in creating student-centered, active learning environment, providing opportunities to use English in authentic scenarios, and creating chances to help students cultivate higher order thinking skills. The overarching research question this study addressed was: What are the effects of the flipped classroom model on the learning of Chinese undergraduate students in a college English class? The following guiding research questions were explored:

1. In what ways is the teaching of English implemented in a flipped classroom?
2. In what ways do students perceive the ways of constructing knowledge and acquiring language when studying English in a flipped classroom?
3. In what ways do students perceive the opportunities for cultivation of higher order thinking skills in a flipped college English class?
4. In what ways do students perceive the benefits and limitations when studying English in a flipped classroom?

By exploring students’ perceptions of their experiences in a flipped college English class, this study explored the effects of the flipped classroom model on Chinese undergraduate students’ language learning and cultivation of cognitive thinking skills.
This chapter provided a description of the methodology that was employed to complete the study, including methodology, research design, respondent selection strategy, data collection, data analysis, trustworthiness, role of the researcher, researcher bias, assumptions and limitations of the study.

**Rationale for Methodology**

This study adopted a qualitative approach to investigate and describe the experiences of students in a flipped English classroom in an effort to understand the effects of the flipped classroom model on students’ learning. Qualitative research involves close observations through interpretative lens of natural contexts within which participants in a study address a problem or issue (Creswell, 2013). Qualitative research methods allow for exploration and understanding of individuals and the complexity of a situation (Creswell, 2013; Yin, 2003; Yin, 2014). Through a qualitative research method, the researcher is able to learn about individual perspectives of the informants in order to add additional meaning to and deepen the understanding of the subject being studied (Creswell, 2013). The qualitative research method was appropriate for this study, because this study attempted to explore Chinese undergraduate students’ perceptions of their experiences in learning English in a flipped classroom so as to gain a deeper understanding of the effects of the flipped classroom model on students’ language learning.

**Research Design**

In order to gain a deeper insight regarding Chinese undergraduate students’ perceptions of their experiences in a flipped college English class, and the effects of the flipped learning environment on their language learning and cognitive thinking skills, I adopted a multiple case study research design.
Case study research has enjoyed a long and distinguished history across many different disciplines, and is a well-known research approach for social science because of its popularity in the fields of psychology, medicine, law, and political science (Creswell, 2013).

Definitions of case study vary from researcher to researcher. Robson (1993) defines case study as “a strategy for doing research which involves an empirical investigation of a particular contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context using multiple sources of evidence” (p. 146). Stake (1995) views case study as “the study of the particularity and complexity of a single case, coming to understand its activity within important circumstances” (p. xi). In Stake’s (2006) view, the prime meaning of a case is the case itself, not the method by which the case operates (Patton, 2015). In contrast, Merriam (1995) regards the case study as a method of inquiry in which the researcher investigates a case with a variety of data collection procedures over a sustained period of time (Patton, 2015).

Creswell (2013) defines case study research as “a qualitative research approach in which the investigator explores a real-life, contemporary bounded system (a case) or multiple bounded systems (cases) over time, through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information” (p. 98). Yin (2003) provides an elaborate twofold definition of case studies which combines the scope of study and the methodological characteristics:

1. A case study is an empirical inquiry that
   - investigates a contemporary phenomenon (the “case”) in depth and within its real-world context, especially when
   - the boundaries between phenomenon and context may not be clearly evident.

2. A case study inquiry
   - copes with the technically distinctive situation in which there will be many more variables of interest than data points, and as one result
   - relies on multiple sources of evidence, with data needing to converge in a triangulating fashion, and as another result
   - benefits from the prior development of theoretical propositions to guide data collection and analysis. (pp. 13-14)
Both Creswell’s (2013) and Yin’s (2003) definitions of case study research indicate that case study research allows researchers to focus on a case or several cases and retain a holistic and real-world perspective.

This study adopted a multiple case study design within which data were collected over a period of six weeks in the fall semester of 2019. This study attempted to examine the experiences of students in a flipped English class given by a teacher who had been honored with the rank of “star teacher” in promoting students’ active learning by flipping the class in a private college in the Eastern part of China. This college is well known in promoting the establishment of active learning classes which are student-centered. By observing students’ learning in this flipped English classroom, I attempted to inquire into students’ perceptions of their experiences in the flipped college English class so as to get an in-depth understanding of the effects of the flipped classroom model on students’ learning. Multiple sources of information were used to collect data from which the case study description and themes could be generated, including classroom observations, interviews, and documents.

Since my study aimed to gain a deeper understanding of the effects of the flipped classroom model on students’ learning in a flipped college English classroom, a multiple case study research design was a wise choice because it allowed me to study multiple cases (students) within a bounded system (an English class delivered by a star teacher who adopted the flipped classroom model to transform the traditional English class) in a natural classroom setting (Creswell, 2013; Yin, 2014).

According to Yin (2014), a case study research design would be preferred when: (a) the focus of the study is to answer “how” or “why” questions; (b) the behavior of those involved in the study cannot be manipulated by the researcher; and (c) the study focuses on a contemporary
rather than historical phenomenon. This study was conducted in a private college in the Eastern part of China, a natural setting under real-world condition. Informants’ stories and perceptions of the flipped classroom model cannot not be manipulated by the researcher. Therefore, case study research design was well-suited for this study.

**Respondent Selection Strategy**

A purposeful sampling strategy was employed to identify and select respondents for this study. Purposeful sampling is useful when a targeted sample needs to be reached quickly and the researcher’s main concern is not sampling for proportionality (Patton, 2015). Moreover, purposeful sampling enables the researcher to identify and select respondents using a small sample size based on the people meeting certain characteristics (Creswell, 2013). The most important reason I used purposeful sampling strategy was that it enabled me to select information-rich cases from which I could learn a great deal about the central phenomenon under study (Patton, 2015).

**Site**

I used purposeful sampling strategy to identify and select my research site. Since my study attempted to explore students’ experiences in a flipped English class, I had to identify and select a research site where the flipped classroom model was adopted and where I could identify information-rich respondents. With this set of criteria, I identified a private college in Shanghai, a city located in the Eastern part of China as my research site.

In order to transform the traditional teacher-centered classroom into the student-centered classroom, this college has made great efforts to explore teaching approaches that may facilitate students’ active learning. Currently, the flipped classroom model, which is known as a pedagogical innovation that can foster students’ active learning (Bergmann & Sams, 2012a;
Bergmann & Sams, 2012b; Bergmann & Sams, 2014; Green, 2015; Steed, 2012), enjoys a growing popularity among colleges and universities in China. This college can be regarded as a pioneer in promoting the flipped classroom model.

With the purpose of improving the quality of education by fostering students’ active learning, this college has been promoting the flipped classroom model among faculties by offering them a training workshop on the flipped classroom model since the fall semester 2015. The college invited professors who were known as experts in the application of the flipped classroom model in China to give speeches and training programs to faculties. In order to encourage the use of the flipped classroom model, the college also organized a teaching contest with focused on the application of the flipped teaching approach.

In addition, this college has made great achievements in promoting the establishment of student-centered active learning classes which adopt the flipped classroom model. This college started a program called the Active Learning Classroom in the fall of 2016, with the purpose of encouraging teachers to convert traditional teacher-centered classroom into student-centered active classroom. A student-centered teaching model was created to guide teachers in teaching and an online teaching system was introduced into the college to facilitate the teaching and learning. The flipped classroom model was integrated into the designed teaching model. One sample model of the Active Learning Classroom teaching model is shown in Figure 2: A Sample of the Active Learning Classroom Teaching Model. By June, 2018, one hundred teachers had taken part in this program and fifty-eight teachers had finished this program successfully. The Academic Committee and the Active Learning Classroom Teaching Reform Steering Group elected twenty-six teachers and conferred upon them the title “star teacher” based on the appraisal of their teaching reform, use of the online teaching system and their academic research
on the teaching reform. These star teachers are aged around thirty-seven on average. Most of them have over ten years of teaching experience and they are familiar with the use of computer technology. Among these twenty-six star teachers, two teachers are from the English Department and both of them teach English majors. I chose this college as my research site because it can be regarded as a pioneer in promoting the flipped classroom model in China. It was easier for me to identify information-rich cases in this college.

Before identifying and selecting participants, researchers need to seek permission from gatekeepers or individuals in authority to conduct research on site (Creswell, 2013). I sent an email to the primary gatekeeper, the Dean of the English Department, to ask for permission, and
I disclosed the purpose of study to her and conveyed to her how my research would bring the least disruption to the activities at the site. After gaining the permission from the primary gatekeeper, I asked for permission of selecting students as the participants of my study from the English instructors who met the criterion for my study, that is, instructors who had adopted and would adopt the flipped approach to transform the traditional English classroom in the coming fall semester 2019. I got the permission from the instructor who was teaching second-year students, and identified informant candidates with the help of the instructor.

Respondents Selection

A purposeful sampling strategy was employed to identify and select respondents for this study. I planned to select six students from one flipped English class to be the cases for this study. I would get permission from one English instructor who had been ranked as a “star teacher” in flipping her English class and would adopt the flipped classroom model with certain level of confidence in the fall semester 2019, the first semester of the 2019-2020 academic year. Among the twenty-six star teachers in the college, two teachers were from the English Department, and both of them teach English majors. In the fall semester 2019, one of them was teaching second-year students, and the other was teaching third-year and fourth-year students. I selected the star teacher who was teaching second-year students in the fall semester 2019. I targeted second-year college students to be my respondents, because they had just entered the college for one year and were likely to remember clearly the traditional teaching model which prevailed in high schools. In the 2018-2019 academic year, the star teacher I selected had adopted the Active Learning Classroom teaching model into which the flipped classroom model is integrated. The students in her class had been familiar with the flipped classroom model to
some degree. Since my study aimed to explore students’ perceptions of their experiences in a flipped English class, these students were the very informants I needed.

I sent an informed consent form to the instructor after she agreed to participate in my study, for my study involved collecting data from her through one interview, classroom observation and documentation. Since the instructor had high English proficiency, I sent her the English consent form without translating it into Chinese.

After getting the permission from the identified and confirmed English instructor to study her flipped English class and the students’ perceived experiences of learning English in a flipped classroom, I asked for students’ permission to be my respondents. The majority of students in English majors were female, with only two to three male students in one class. Therefore, it was hard to predict having the same number of female and male students to be my respondents. Since the majority of English major students were female and this case study was not aimed to generalize its findings, the lack of male respondents would not be a critical issue.

The students I targeted were second-year college students who were at least 18 years old. I asked the instructor to send the informed consent form to her students via Tencent QQ (also known as QQ), an instant messaging software service developed by the Chinese tech giant Tencent. Many teachers in this college set a QQ group with all students as members which was convenient for teachers to make announcements or to share learning materials. It was efficient to send the informed consent form to every student in the class via QQ. In order to help students fully understand the items listed in the consent form, I translated the consent form into Chinese and had the Chinese consent form back-translated by an English teacher from the English Department of my college who has a Master’s degree in English. Students who were interested in participating in my study would be asked to contact me via email, telephone number, or
Tencent QQ which I provided in the consent form. Once contacted, I would answer the students’ questions concerning my study and any questions about participation in the study via QQ individually. Once the students fully understood the informed consent form and volunteered to participate, I would ask them to sign the informed consent form and send it to me via Tencent QQ.

With the process mentioned above, I identified six students to be my respondents. Creswell (2013) suggests no more than four or five cases in a single study and claims that this number “should provide ample opportunity to identify themes of the cases as well as conduct cross-case theme analysis” (p. 157). Patton (2002) also points out that there is no rule for the number of participants in a multiple case study and “the insight of the cases lies more in researcher’s ability rather than the number of participants” (p. 245). According to Duff (2018), many multiple case studies of language learners have four to six focal participants, “which increases the sense of representativeness of, or variation among, cases” (p. 33). Since the respondents I targeted for my study were English learners, I selected six students to be my respondents. With these six students as my respondents, I explored students’ perspectives in order to get a deeper insight regarding the effects the flipped classroom model may exert on students’ language learning and cultivation of cognitive thinking skills.

**Data Collection**

This study adopted a multiple case study design within which data were collected over a period of six weeks in the fall semester of 2019. Multiple sources of data were collected from which the case study description and themes could be generated, including classroom observation, interviews, and documents.
Before collecting data from the respondents, I sent informed consent form to the respondents with information about the research’s purpose and details of what participation in the study entails. Participants were given an opportunity to discuss the study before agreeing to participate.

**Interviews**

The interview is regarded as one of the most important sources of case study evidence (Yin, 2014). Case study interviews expect the researcher to satisfy the needs of the line of inquiry and meanwhile use friendly and non-threatening questions in an open-ended interview format (Yin, 2014).

In my case study, I conducted one one-on-one semi-structured open-ended interview with each of the participants. Each interview lasted about thirty minutes. Since the second-year students I selected for my study had been exposed to the Active Learning Classroom model for one year, they should be familiar with the flipped classroom model which was integrated into the Active Learning Classroom model. I conducted one interview with each of the participants around the fourth week of the sixteen-teaching-week semester. The interview focused on students’ perceptions of their experiences in the flipped college English class, including the perceived changes in the ways of acquiring English language, benefits and challenges they faced in the flipped English class, and their perceived opportunities for cultivating their higher order thinking skills. Around the fifth week of the semester, I brought a detailed description of each case with the themes generated from the data collected to member check with the participants via QQ individually. Through member-checking, I asked the students about the accuracy of the data and any possible updates or additional details about their experiences in the flipped English class.
Interviews with students were conducted in Chinese considering the possibility that using a foreign language might cause difficulties for students to understand the interview questions and offer ample amount of information. Interview protocol was designed to explore what students experienced in a flipped college English class and how they perceived the effects of the flipped classroom model on their language learning and levels of cognitive thinking. I translated the interview protocol into Chinese and asked a teacher from the English Department of my college who has a Master’s degree in English to back-translate it. Then I compared the interview protocol with the back-translated version to find any possible differences that indicated need for improvement in the translated Chinese interview protocol.

In addition, I conducted one semi-structured open-ended interview with the instructor, exploring the way she implemented the flipped classroom model in her English class as well as her perceptions of students’ learning in the flipped English class. The interview was conducted around the fourth week of the sixteen-teaching-week semester and lasted about fifteen minutes. Since the instructor was an English teacher with high English proficiency level, I conducted the interview in English.

All the interviews were recorded with the permission of the participants and transcribed verbatim afterwards. The recordings were deleted immediately after I transcribed them. Prior to the interviews, I reviewed my interview protocols with two teachers from the English Department who were familiar with the flipped classroom model and gained insight into possible ways to improve the interview protocol. This collaboration could reveal problems with the interview protocols, and help the researcher to refine the interview questions and procedures before the larger study begins (Creswell, 2013; Yin, 2003; Yin, 2014).

Classroom Observation
In this study, classroom observation was made and fieldnotes were taken around the third week of the fall semester 2019 at the research site. Teachers in this college are expected to observe other teachers’ classes and learn from each other within the first eight weeks of the semester. I chose to make classroom observation within this period as a non-participant observer in the class in order to minimize the degree of obtrusiveness. For this study, I used observation to get a sense of the context, observing the physical setting, participants’ behaviors and actions, activities and interactions taking place in the classroom.

As one of the key tools for collecting data in qualitative research, observations are carried out by the researcher who uses his or her five senses to note a phenomenon in the field setting (Creswell, 2013). Observations offer the researcher a first-hand experience, allowing the researcher to keep fieldnotes of participants’ behaviors and actions in class as they occur, and are useful in examining actions that may have been difficult for participants to discuss openly (Creswell, 2013; Yin, 2014). In addition, according to Patton (2002), “observations help the researcher to identify something that has not been discovered in the interview and provide the chance for the observer to capture the context in which people contact with each other” (p. 262).

Moreover, an observer can never become completely invisible if he or she is present in the classroom. In order to minimize the degree of obtrusiveness and enable students to behave in a normal fashion (Yin, 2014), I observed the class as a non-participant observer without direct involvement with the respondents (Creswell, 2013). During the course of observations, I kept detailed fieldnotes on the participants’ behaviors and activities, and wrote memos or reflective notes such as my personal reflection, and initial interpretation of the data collected. Data collected from the classroom observation would be compared with data collected from the
interviews and students’ journal entries to see whether the data collected from different sources remained consistent.

**Documents**

Documents are another useful source of data in case studies (Creswell, 2013; Yin, 2014). According to Yin (2014), the most significant use of documents for case study research is to corroborate evidence collected from other sources.

In my multiple case study, I asked the respondents to write five journal entries about their experiences in doing projects or assignments for the flipped English class during the six weeks of study, following a structured format as shown in Appendix F. I sent a template of the journal entry to the students and asked them to complete one entry every week. The textbook they used consisted of fourteen units, and each unit of the textbook focused on one subject matter and provided two articles for learning and varied exercises for practice. Teachers usually lead students to learn each unit with activities or assignments designed by themselves. I asked students to describe in the journal entries their perceptions of their experiences in finishing any assignments or activities assigned by the teacher. I asked them to send me the completed journal entries to me via QQ. A journal entry is an unobtrusive means of data collection that helps the researcher get a better understanding of the participants’ minds and thoughts (Yin, 2014). What’s more, journals are flexible, and are capable of accessing information that may be difficult to access using other methods (Alaszewski, 2006). Additionally, the journals offer a stable piece of evidence that the researcher can review regularly, allowing the researcher to compare the data collected from the journals with data gathered from other sources (Creswell, 2013). In my study, the journal entry would act as a reference, providing me with data gathered over an extended period of time. In this way, I could gain an insight into the participants’ thoughts as well as how
the participants change over the six weeks of study. Once the research was completed, the participants’ journal entries would be deleted to protect the participants’ anonymity.

Other documents like the instructor’s teaching plans, some of students’ homework, course projects or worksheets (both online or written ones) were collected in order to get more details to corroborate data obtained from the interviews and the observations. In addition, they were used to answer my research questions and help me to find out how the flipped classroom model affected students’ learning.

I asked the student participants to send me a copy of their course projects and worksheets via email or Tencent QQ. In order to observe online assignments assigned by the teacher, I asked the teacher to allow me to get access to her online teaching platform which was open to all teachers in the college. I would observe the student participants’ online assignments if any. I asked the teacher to share a copy of her teaching plans with me via Tencent QQ or email. The student participants were asked to send any written copies of documentation to me by express with freight collect service, or to take a photo of those copies and send the photos to me via Tencent QQ or email, as was desired by them.

Collecting data from multiple sources, I could triangulate the data collection and strengthen the credibility of the data and findings (Creswell, 2013). To protect the privacy of the participants, I used pseudonyms for each of the participants and all physical locations referred to in the course of the interviews.

**Data Analysis**

This section provided a description of the data analysis procedures used in this study. According to Creswell (2013), data analysis in qualitative research consists of the following procedures: “preparing and organizing the data for analysis, then reducing the data into themes
through a process of coding and condensing the codes, and finally presenting the data in figures, tables, or a discussion” (p. 180). This study conducted a holistic analysis of the data, and followed the procedures mentioned above to deal with the data collected.

In the process of collecting data, I created and organized files for data in an orderly manner, which facilitated the data analysis in later stages of my study. I used different folders for each of my respondents and all data collected from correspondent interviews, observations and documents were arranged neatly in their folders. To guarantee confidentiality of the data, I stored all the digital data in my personal computer with accessibility kept to myself only. I put all the paper documents in an archival paper bag and locked it in a drawer in my home. All the data collected and the informed consent forms would be kept for three years after the completion of my study and then deleted or shredded.

Then I started reading and writing marginal notes to organize and code the data that I had collected. While coding the data, I followed the data coding, category grouping and theme finding procedure suggested by Creswell (2013). During the repeated reading of the text, I used color stickers to mark different categories identified across all the data sources. Through identifying and organizing significant statements by the participants, I grouped the data into meaningful units. According to Creswell (2013), in qualitative research, researchers “build their patterns, categories, and themes from the ‘bottom up,’ by organizing the data inductively into increasingly more abstract units of information” (p. 44). This means that I had to constantly check the themes that had been generated against the data collected until I established a comprehensive set of themes.
After the themes had been generated, I wrote a detailed case description for each respondent, and member-checked with them for accuracy and additional details. If any new information or themes came up, I would add them into the case description.

Then I conducted a cross-case analysis and generated common themes that were shared by the student participants on their perceptions of the learning experiences in the flipped college English class.

In the final interpretive phase, I reported the meaning of the cases in the light of the constructivism, since the flipped classroom model is claimed to be grounded in the learning theory of constructivism. In addition, data regarding students’ cultivation of cognitive thinking skills were coded based on the revised version of Bloom’s taxonomy, and the findings would be interpreted in relation to the revised Bloom’s taxonomy, with the purpose of investigating whether the flipped classroom model inverted the revised Bloom’s taxonomy and facilitated students’ cultivation of higher order thinking skills.

**Trustworthiness**

Triangulation, member-checking and thick description were used to ensure trustworthiness and validity of the data collected.

According to Patton (2002), there are four types of triangulation in doing evaluations, namely, data triangulation, investigator triangulation, theory triangulation, and methodological triangulation. I adopted the data triangulation to add to the trustworthiness of the data collected. A major benefit of conducting a case study is the ability to collect data from multiple sources, which enables the researcher to address a wider range of historical and behavioral issues, develop convergent evidence and establish construct validity of the case study (Yin, 2014). In
my case study, I collected data from multiple interviews, observations and documents which helped me to triangulate the sources of data and determine the consistency of the findings.

In addition, member checking can be used to verify data, findings and interpretations with the participants in the study (Patton, 2015). Member checking is claimed to be “the most critical technique for establishing credibility” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 314). It refers to the process in which the researcher takes data, analyses, interpretations, and conclusions back to the informants so as to improve the accuracy and credibility of the data, findings and interpretations (Creswell, 2013). In my case study, the interviews were recorded and reviewed to check the accuracy of the interview transcripts, and then I brought the case study narratives with themes generated from data collected to member check with the participants for accuracy and possible addition of new information through informal interviews near the end of data collection.

Although member checking has been taken as an indispensable tool for establishing credibility in qualitative research, researchers should be aware of the potential harms that member checks may bring to the participants (Hallett, 2012). One source of possible harm to the respondents is that the act of reviewing the materials may exert negative impacts on their future (Hallett, 2012). In order to avoid potential unintentional harm on participants, I needed to critically reflect on the process of member checking and possible harms this process might bring to the participants (Hallett, 2012). In my study, I sent the case descriptions to my participants and member-checked with them via QQ. They did the member checking willingly and were not bothered by reviewing the data I had collected from them.

Furthermore, thick description is another validation strategy used to add to the trustworthiness of a qualitative study (Creswell, 2013; Lincoln & Guba, 1986). I provided a thick description of the cases and the contexts under study as well as the themes generated from
the data. Such rich and thick description allows readers to judge the transferability of the findings of the study to other cases or settings (Creswell, 2013; Lincoln & Guba, 1986).

**Role of the Researcher**

According to Patton (2002), qualitative inquiry may be more intrusive than quantitative study because “qualitative methods are highly personal and interpersonal” (p. 407). Since the researcher is the instrument of inquiry and everything he or she brings to the inquiry – such as his or her experience, training skills, background, sensitivity to cultural differences and capability of empathy – may affect the credibility of the findings (Patton, 2015). Therefore, I needed to pay attention to my role in the study. In this case study, I took the role of the primary instrument in data collection and the role of the interpreter of the data collected.

In the role of the primary instrument, I allowed the case to unfold naturally, and let the participants to tell their own stories. While observing the participants, I acted as a non-participant observer to minimize the degree of obtrusiveness and enable students to behave in a normal fashion (Creswell, 2013; Yin, 2014). However, I had to pay attention to the Hawthorne Effect that might be exerted on students. The Hawthorne Effect refers to “a type of reactivity in which individuals modify or improve an aspect of their behavior in response to their awareness of being observed” (Sun, 2017, p. 242). When I carried out the classroom observation, I found that the students were not bothered by having an observer in their classroom and behaved in the way they normally did. The instructor told me that the students had been accustomed to the common practice of being observed, for this college expected teachers to observe each other’s class and learn from each other every semester.

In the role of interpreter, I needed to suspend my past knowledge and experience to understand the phenomenon being studied at a deeper level. I had to bracket myself out of the
study, setting aside my own beliefs, feelings and perceptions in order to be more open and
faithful to the phenomenon (Creswell, 2013). While interpreting the data collected, I described
the context as it was and focused on the participants’ perceptions of their experiences in the
flipped college English class.

**Researcher Bias**

Since I was the instrument of data collection in the qualitative inquiry for this study, I
needed to be aware of and consider the potential sources of bias. Since I had never used a
flipped classroom model myself, and what I knew about the flipped classroom model was mainly
drawn from literature reading, I was able to focus on the participants’ experience without being
distracted or affected my own experience with the phenomenon. Although I like to design some
tasks or projects to engage students in active learning, I am more of a traditional teacher,
dominating the class most of the time. I am aware of the disadvantages of the traditional
lectures, so I am in favor of the approaches that can lead to active learning. Therefore, I am
biased. This was a bias that I needed to take into consideration when conducting the study. In
interpreting the data, I needed to pay attention to how my understandings are introduced to the
study (Creswell, 2013).

**Assumptions**

There were several assumptions in this study. One was that with the flipped class model
promoted as a relatively new teaching practice in the private college under study, the teachers
and administrators would offer support in the data collection process. Another assumption was
that respondents in this study would provide candid information about their experiences in the
flipped college English class, and answer the interview questions openly and honestly.

**Limitations**
There were several limitations in this case study research design.

First, the purposeful selection of a specific college English class delivered by one instructor might not give me complete information concerning the effects of the flipped approach on students’ learning, for the flipped approach itself could be carried out in a variety of ways.

Second, the results of the study could not necessarily be generalized to larger population, because the case study research design is bounded in space and time (Creswell, 2013). The cases I studied for the purpose of the current research could only add new understanding to the phenomenon under study.

Moreover, there was possibility that the participants provided selective memories to the researcher. It was possible that the participants might provide the information that they thought the researcher preferred. In this study, this was addressed by triangulation of the data collection which provided opportunity to corroborate information obtained from multiple sources of data.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I provided a description of the methodology employed for this study. The purpose of this research was to gain an in-depth understanding of the effects of the flipped classroom model on Chinese undergraduate students’ learning in a college English class. Case study research design seems to be a good choice for gaining an in-depth understanding of a phenomenon in real-world context.

In terms of respondent selection strategy, I employed purposeful sampling strategy to identify information-rich cases for study. I identified and selected an English class delivered by an instructor who had been ranked as a “star teacher” in flipping her class in a private college in the Eastern part of China. Six students in this class were selected as the respondents for this study.
Data were collected from multiple sources, namely, interviews, classroom observations and documents. I used triangulation and member checking to validate the accuracy of the data and credibility of the findings and interpretations.

The data analysis in this study followed the data coding, category grouping and theme finding procedures; within-case and cross-case thematic analyses were adopted to gain an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon being studied.

Issues such as researcher’s role and bias, assumptions, and limitations of the study were also addressed briefly in this chapter.
CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

English education started in China in the 19th century when the Qing Dynasty (1636-1912) was on the decline. With a history of over one and a half century, English education in China has gone through continuous reforms. Ever since the implementation of the open-door policy in 1978, English education has grown in importance, with many educators and scholars exploring effective teaching methods to improve students’ English learning experience. Located in Shanghai, a modern international city on the eastern coast of China, a private college, which was founded in 2005, vigorously responded to the trend of educational reform. To improve students learning experiences, this college launched a program called the Active Learning Classroom in the fall of 2016, designing a sample of student-centered teaching model (See Figure 2 in Chapter 3) as a guidance for the teachers taking part in this program. Integrated into this teaching model was the flipped classroom model, a pedagogical innovation that can foster students’ active learning. The purpose of this study was to explore the effects of the flipped classroom model on students’ learning in a college English class in China. This college provided information-rich cases for my study. Therefore, I conducted a multiple case study in the English class of a star teacher who had taken part in the Active Learning Classroom program.

In this chapter, first, I introduced the participants in my study, including the star teacher whose English class I studied, and six second-year college students from the teacher’s class. Second, I described the active learning classroom teaching model adopted in my research site. Third, I described the English teaching in the star teacher’s English class. Then I provided a detailed case description of each of the student participants showing their perceptions of English
learning experiences in this English class, and finally I conducted a cross-case analysis and drew
common themes shared by the six student participants.

**Introduction to the Participants**

The star teacher Yu whose English class I studied is an English teacher teaching English
majors in a private school in the eastern part of China. She has been teaching English in this
private college for nearly 12 years. A young teacher in her thirties, the star teacher Yu is familiar
with the use of computer technology in teaching. Teaching English for nearly 12 years, she has
made great achievements in English teaching, winning several prizes in teaching contests. She
was among the pioneers who participated in the teaching reforms launched by the college. She
participated in the Active Learning Classroom program in fall 2016 and was conferred the tile of
“star teacher” by the end of 2018. In the fall semester 2019, she was teaching an intensive
reading English course to second-year college students majoring in English. She had taught
these students for one year since they first came to this college.

Six Chinese students from this star teachers’ English class volunteered to be the
participants in my study. The following Table 1 showed the basic information of these student
participants with regards to their names, ages, and the time of receiving formal education of the
English language.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Start of the Formal English Education</th>
<th>Birth Place</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ruan</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Grade One at primary school</td>
<td>Henan Province</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hua</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Grade One at primary school</td>
<td>Henan Province</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yue</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>Grade One at primary school</td>
<td>Shanxi Province</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jia</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>Grade One at primary school</td>
<td>Shanghai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zhen</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>Grade Three at primary school</td>
<td>Zhejiang Province</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gang</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Grade One at primary school</td>
<td>Zhejiang Province</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
They were second-year college students majoring in English. In order to keep confidential the identity of my participants, I gave each of them a pseudonym. Among the six student participants, two are male and four are female. Ruan and Hua come from the same province, Henan Province, in the north of China. Both of them are twenty years old. Ruan was exposed to English words when she was in kindergarten. Both Ruan and Hua took formal English education in Grade One at primary school. Yue, a sweet girl aged 19 years old, comes from Shanxi Province, another province in the north of China. She started learning English when she was in Grade One at primary school. Jia is 19 years old, and he was born and raised in Shanghai, the same city where the college is located. Since Shanghai is a modern international city in the eastern part of China, Jia has enjoyed access to rich educational resources in this city. Jia was exposed to English when he was in kindergarten. He also started taking English classes in Grade One at primary school. In addition to the English classes at school, he also learned English in some English training institutions. Zhen and Gang come from different cities in Zhejiang Province which is to the south of Shanghai. Zhen is 19 years old. She did not take any English classes in English training institutions, and she did not start learning English until she was in the third grade at primary school. Gang, a 20-year-old gentleman, started learning English in Grade one at primary school. When he was a child, he also had the experience of learning English at an English training institution.

The above description showed that all the six student participants started learning English at a young age. They had been learning English for over ten years by the time I conducted this study.

Active Learning Classroom Teaching Model
The research site I targeted was a private college in the eastern part of China which was founded in 2015. In order to bring vitality to the classroom, this college launched an educational reform with the Active Learning Classroom program in the fall of 2016, aiming to convert traditional teacher-centered classroom into student-centered active learning classroom. The purpose of this program was to enhance students’ autonomous and active learning and cultivate students’ independent and critical thinking ability through organizing cooperative and exploring learning activities. By June, 2018, one hundred teachers had taken part in this program and fifty-eight teachers had finished this program successfully. In late December, 2018, the Academic Committee and the “Active Learning Classroom” Teaching Reform Steering Group elected twenty-six teachers and conferred upon them the title “star teacher” based on the appraisal of their teaching reform, use of the online teaching system and their academic research on the teaching reform.

In order to provide guidance to teachers in the teaching reform, a sample teaching model (See Figure 2 in Chapter 3) was created, with the flipped classroom model as the core of the teaching model. Teachers were encouraged to adjust this model according the characteristics of the subjects they were teaching. However, they should follow the fundamental elements of the sample teaching model which were unfolded with two axes, the time axis (before class, in class and after class) and the role axis (teacher, student and technology). The following is the description of the fundamental elements based on the interaction of the two axes.

**Before Class**

Before class, the teacher is expected to assign a list of tasks and offer learning resources for students to learn by themselves. The list of tasks can include guidance for learning, learning tasks, questions, tests, reflections on self-learning, etc. The purpose of assigning tasks before
class is to trigger students’ interest in learning, clarifying the contents and objectives of learning to students and guiding students to cultivate the capability of autonomous learning, i.e. learning by oneself and being responsible for one’s own studies. The learning resources shared with students can be articles, research papers, videos, and any other types of learning resources related to the learning contents in class. The purpose of offering learning resources to students is to assist students in their autonomous learning and getting well-prepared for in-class learning as well as to help students expand knowledge related to the subject being learned. One online learning center is offered as a platform for sharing the learning resources. Students are expected to finish the learning tasks assigned by the teacher with both the learning resources provided by the teacher and the resources they find by themselves before class, hence the learning is flipped. Learning before class may help students bring questions to the class and become involved in follow-up studies. The purpose of the flipped learning is to prepare students for the active learning in class.

In Class

The teacher is expected to use the in-class time to engage students in active learning with case analysis and/or project-driven teaching. The teacher guides students to analyze a case with the theoretical knowledge learned by students before class so as to help students understand better what they have learned. The project-driven teaching requires the teacher to create an authentic learning environment to help students to construct knowledge through doing a project or task individually or collaboratively with the guidance and assistance from the teacher. The purpose of the case analysis and the project-driven teaching is to engage students in active learning and cultivate students’ ability to analyze and solve problems as well as the ability to cooperate with others. Students get more opportunities for exploring, sharing and collaborative
learning. This converts the traditional teacher-centered classroom into a student-centered classroom where students take an active role in learning and have the chance to raise questions. This might be a challenge to the teacher, for he/she has to answer questions with no prepared answers and help students solve any problems with no prepared solutions. The online learning center serves as a communication platform and provides support for in-class interaction, for the teacher can start an online activity such as questionnaire, discussion, and voting. The teacher gets to know how well students are learning with the data collected by the online learning system. The online platform also provides students with more opportunities to communicate with each other.

**After Class**

The teacher is expected to track students’ learning by keeping a record of students’ performance in any assignments and tasks. The online learning center offers an assessment platform where the teacher can monitor students’ learning online with the data collected regarding the students’ learning activities in this online learning center. In addition, instead of relying on exams to assess students’ academic achievement, the teacher adopts a multi-dimensional way of assessing students’ learning, which may include self-evaluation, peer evaluation, and the teacher’s evaluation. Students may be assigned a variety of tasks which not only encourage students to apply what they have learned, but also engage students in further in-depth thinking and studying.

This teaching model integrates the flipped classroom model and aims to bring vitality to the classroom and engage students in active learning. Teachers are encouraged to establish their own teaching models based on the characteristics of the disciplines and the actual needs of students. I selected an English class delivered by a star teacher Yu who had been implementing
the active learning classroom teaching model for some time. In the following pages, I provided a description of the English teaching in this star teacher’s English class.

**English Teaching in the Star Teacher’s English Class**

The star teacher Yu whose English class I studied was teaching an intensive English reading course, a required basic course for undergraduate English majors which aimed to help students develop integrated English skills of listening, speaking, reading, writing and translating. Yu had been teaching this course in this college for nearly 12 years. She was familiar with the use of computer technology in teaching.

At the beginning of the semester, Yu gave students an orientation of the new semester, explaining the requirements for and the grading policy of the course. She clarified her expectation that students should finish assignments and tasks in a timely manner and that students should be actively engaged in any class activities. Students’ academic achievement in the class would be assessed multidimensionally. In addition to the final exam which was a must in the college, students’ achievement would also be evaluated based on their in-class participation and their performance in assignments and tasks such as finishing worksheet, word map, translation, dictation and projects. This differs from the traditional practice of assessing students’ academic achievement merely through the final exam. With a clear idea of the grading policy, students might be motivated to learn autonomously and actively. As the star teacher Yu stated in the interview, the grading policy, like giving 1-point bonus to those who actively participated in discussion or deducting 3 points for failing to submit an assignment on time, was a means to engage students in active and autonomous learning.
Yu planned her teaching following the sample of active learning classroom teaching model, but she also made adjustments in her teaching according to the characteristics of the course she was teaching and the needs of her students.

**Before Class**

Before starting one unit in the textbook, the teacher Yu would assign a variety of pre-class learning tasks for students and offer learning resources in the online learning center. Students could get access to the posted assignments and learning resources through a mobile learning application called Chaoxing Learning APP. Yu would assign different learning tasks according to the learning contents. The basic pre-class learning tasks for every unit of the textbook were completing the word map and a worksheet designed by the teacher.

The word map was designed by the teacher Yu to guide students in learning new words. At the beginning of the semester, she offered students a template for a word map (See Figure 3) and a sample of a word map (See Figure 4), which served as a guidance for students to learn vocabulary on their own. Yu stated that the purpose of this task was to cultivate students’ habit of autonomous learning, and to teach them how to learn new words. She expected each student to write down no less than 15 words based on the template for each unit. “Through this task, I want students to realize that as an English major, they should finish the basic learning task of remembering and understanding vocabulary before class,” Yu said. This task shows that the learning of vocabulary was moved out of the class. From the template and the sample of the word map, it can be seen that the learning of a new word in this college English class did not simply involve memorizing the meaning and spelling of the word. Students were expected to learn the use of the word and enlarge their vocabulary by learning the words’ derivatives, synonyms and antonyms.
Figure 3. A Template for Word Map

When I was ten I was suddenly confronted with the anguish of moving from the only home had ever known.

The students are always confronted with the difficulties of finding the right meaning of a word in the dictionary.

V-T If you are confronted with a problem, task, or difficulty, you have to deal with it. 面临 (问题、任务、困难等)

confronting adj.
confrontation

face with encounter
avoid surrender
Con-together Front-face

Figure 4. A Sample of Word Map
The other basic pre-class task was to complete the worksheet the teacher posted in the online learning center. The teacher Yu designed one worksheet for each unit according to the learning contents. In the worksheet, she offered learning materials related to the grammatical points which were the focus of the grammar exercise in the textbook. She also provided students with exercises related to the learning materials in the worksheet, checking students’ understanding of the grammatical points explained in the learning materials. Sometimes, a test would be posted online for students to take, which helped the teacher to learn how well students had grasped the grammatical points. The teacher Yu stated, “I won’t teach them the grammatical points shown in the worksheet, but I will explain in class the grammatical points that students appear not to grasp.” She said that the focus of her teaching in class would not be grammar. Since the Tests for English Majors were unlikely to test basic grammatical points, she dealt with the teaching of grammar in a more flexible way. This learning task shows that the learning of grammar was also moved out of the class.

In addition, the teacher Yu would post some questions related to the article to be learned in the worksheet. Students were expected to read the article and ponder over the questions before class. These questions were used to facilitate students’ learning of the article, checking students’ comprehension of the article. Zhen and Yue, student participants of my study, said that the questions in the worksheet helped to check their understanding of the article assigned, and that they would also raise questions and bring questions to the class.

In addition to the tasks mentioned above, the teacher Yu would add different pre-class tasks according to the learning contents, such as watching videos, making up stories, and role play. These tasks were aimed to help students to learn the background information of the article to be learned, or to expand their knowledge concerning the topic of the unit.
The above description shows that flipped learning occurred in this college English class. With the guidance from the teacher, students learned grammar and vocabulary by themselves before class. The students were also expected to read and understand the article before going to class for in-depth learning.

**In Class**

The day I came to this college, I was impressed by the classroom where students took their English class. It was a high-tech smart classroom equipped with multimedia teaching facilities, such as a computer, a large screen on the wall, projector and a whiteboard. The teacher Yu turned on the teaching facilities merely by pressing one button on a small device with a touch screen. Every student sat before a small desk in the shape of a trapezoid. The desks and chairs were movable and the desks could be arranged to form a round table. Nevertheless, in this English class, the desks were arranged in rows, like those in the traditional classroom. Two cameras were installed in this classroom, one on the front wall and the other on the back wall of the classroom. The activities in the classroom were digitally transmitted to the screen in a monitoring room in this teaching building.

The students didn’t seem surprised when they saw me sitting in a seat to the side in the last row. I chose this seat in the corner in order to minimize my obtrusiveness to the classroom. Later, I found that the students appeared not to be bothered by my presence. Some students smiled at me and most of the students didn’t take a glance at me. Since this college required its teachers to learn from each other by observing their colleagues’ classes, these students seemed to be aware of this practice and were not surprised by any unexpected observer. The students were sitting in rows. The teacher Yu showed her teaching PowerPoint on the screen and started the class with a greeting to the students.
The teacher Yu led the students to carry out an in-depth analysis of an article titled “Cultural Encounters” in class. This article was a piece of argumentative writing focusing on the profound relationship between language and culture. The students were expected to have read the article and pondered over the questions related to this article. They were also supposed to have learned the new words in the article. When I carried out the classroom observation, they were making text analysis guided by the teacher. The teacher Yu told me that she usually started the learning of an article with some warming-up activities, such as watching videos and discussing topic-related questions. Then she would check students’ understanding of the article by asking students to answer questions, retell the main idea of the article and analyze the structure of the article. Students were expected to have done the pre-class learning tasks; in class they were expected to get involved in the class activities and speak English.

When I observed the class, they were making a text analysis, reading and analyzing the article paragraph by paragraph. This appeared to be a traditional lecture to me at first. Then I found that the teacher constantly interacted with the students by raising questions and starting a discussion with students from time to time. It was different from the one-way lecturing in a traditional classroom. The teacher Yu spent little time explaining the usage of new words or the grammatical points. Although she did teach some new words to students, she didn’t simply tell the meaning of a new word to the students, but she explained the use of the word with sample sentences and asked students to apply the word in translating sentences. Most of the time she was discussing the content of the article with students and leading them to comprehend the article. Most students appeared to be well-prepared for the class, for whenever the teacher raised a question, she received quick response from several students. There were frequent interactions
between the teacher and the students. Take the teaching of the fifth paragraph of the article as an example. The following is the fifth paragraph of the article:

The early Bible translators hit the problem of untranslatability head-on. How do you translate the image of the Lamb of God for a culture in which sheep do not exist? What exactly was the fruit that Eve picked in the Garden of Eden? What was the creature that swallowed Jonah, given that whales are not given to swimming in warm, southern seas? Faced with unsurmountable linguistic problems, translators negotiated the boundaries between languages and came up with a compromise. (Bassnett, 2014, p. 63)

When they were analyzing the fifth paragraph, I took down fieldnotes of most of the questions raised by the teacher. To my surprise, the teacher raised about 16 questions while leading students to analyze this single short paragraph which consists of only five sentences. The following are the questions raised by the teacher:

- What’s the topic sentence of this paragraph?
- How did early Bible translators deal with the problem of untranslatability?
- What does “compromise” mean?
- What does “Lamb of God” refer to?
- What do you think was the fruit that Eve picked in the Garden of Eden?
- How the story goes?
- What is the difference between “snake” and “serpent”?
- Who is Jonah?
- What happened to him?
- Why did the creature swallow him?
- Could you describe the story with complete sentences?
- What was his Job?
- What did God ask him to do?
- What’s the meaning of “come up with”?
- What can you learn from this paragraph?
- What does the author want to convey to the readers?

The teacher used these questions to help students comprehend the paragraph and learn new words. In addition, she encouraged students to apply English to story-telling. The last two questions led students to think analytically, exploring the relationship between language and culture, and probing into the author’s purpose of writing.

The teacher Yu did not answer these questions directly. Instead, she was guiding the students to think and apply English all the time. For instance, when she asked students about the
story of Adam and Eve, most students seemed to know the story. The teacher asked one student to retell the story, but the student could only give a brief description of what happened to Adam and Eve. Then the teacher showed two slides with pictures and short passages from Genesis. After telling students the story of the creation of human beings by God, the teacher compared the story with the Chinese story of the origin of life and pointed out the phenomenon of inequality between man and woman reflected in language, triggering students’ great interest in exploring the topics of cultural differences and gender inequality reflected in languages.

When the teacher asked the students to tell the story of Jonah, she gave students several minutes to discuss the story. The students were excited. I could hear heated discussion here and there in the classroom. The students quickly formed small groups by themselves and tried to tell the story in their own words in English. To my amusement, I could hear some Chinese words popping out from some groups. When the teacher asked students to share the story of Jonah, the whole class was silent. Then one gentleman stood up and asked whether he could tell the story in Chinese for he had difficulty in translating the story into English. This appeared to be a challenging task for students. The teacher allowed the student to tell the story in Chinese, but she asked other students to listen to him carefully and tried to translate his story into English. When the other students hesitated to stand up and translate the story, the teacher gave them guidance by raising questions such as “What was his job?” and “What did God ask him to do?”.

The teacher gave students about 3 minutes to organize their words. With the guidance from the teacher, this time the students were trying to retell the story of Jonah in English, and I heard no Chinese words popping out. When the story time came, several students raised their hands.

In addition to questions and discussions, the teacher also guided students to translate the paragraph. The teacher showed a slide on which several versions of translation of the last
sentence of the fifth paragraph were displayed. Apparently, the students had done the translation work before class because the translations shown on the slides were done by students. The teacher picked the sentence which many students had difficulty in understanding and/or translating. Instead of showing one standard answer to students, the teacher asked the students to analyze the sentence and judge which version of translation was correct or better. Students took part in the discussion immediately, and this time most of the students were discussing in Chinese, pondering over more appropriate words to be used in the translation. The teacher pointed out that some translations showed lack of correct understanding of the sentence. The teacher guided students to analyze the sentence and encouraged them to translate the sentence in their own words. At last, she showed a translation and said, “It’s for your reference only.”

Through class observation, I found that students were engaged in active learning in class. They were guided by the teacher and learned through interacting with both the teacher and their peers. The teacher did not dominate the class all the time; instead, she engaged students in learning through frequent interactions with them. Nevertheless, the learning of the article was not fully moved out of the class. The teacher spent most of the time leading students to make an in-depth reading of the article, guiding students to think and creating more opportunities for students to practice their oral English.

What I observed in the classroom only shows some of the activities students took in class. Through the interviews with the teacher and the student participants, I learned that they had a variety of activities in class such as discussion, brainstorming, role play, and project presentation.

The above description gives a glimpse of the activities taking place in the star teacher’s English class. The student participants acknowledged that this English class was quite different
from the traditional English class they had had in high school. In the English class in high school, students spent most of the time listening to the teacher and taking notes. In contrast, in this college English class, they were expected to get involved in various kinds of learning tasks. The students claimed that they became more active in this college English class.

**After Class**

After class, the teacher Yu also used the online learning system to share learning resources with the students. She would upload the PowerPoint and learning materials used in class online for students to review. In order to engage students in further in-depth thinking and learning, she sometimes started a discussion online related to any learning task that had taken place in class. Additional exercises related to vocabulary, grammar and translating skill were assigned to the students.

All the student participants mentioned the task of dictation which was a kind of test used to evaluate their vocabulary learning. After completing the teaching of one unit, the teacher would assess students’ learning outcomes through dictation. The students claimed that this task was more challenging than that in the high school. High school teachers usually carried out the dictation by telling students the Chinese meaning of a word and asking them to write down the English word or vice versa. Dictation in this college English class was more challenging, for the teacher would not speak Chinese and dictated words or phrases in varied ways: explaining the meaning of a word or a phrase in English, telling students the antonym or synonym of the word or phrased dictated, describing the context the word or phrase could be used, etc. The student participants said that they tried to grasp what they had learned so that they could do well in the dictation. “Learning by rote what we have learned is not adequate to do well in dictation; we
have to really understand those words and phrases and know how to use them,” said one student participant, Yue.

Another activity worth mentioning was the project of news reporting, for all the student participants described this task in their journal entries and in the interview. At the beginning of the semester, the teacher told the students this learning task, and clarified how this task would be evaluated and graded with a slide (See Figure 5).

**Project—News Reporting**

- 3rd–13th week (11 weeks)
- One group for each week (Class 1: Thursday; Class 2: Tuesday)
- 3-4 persons in each group; group leader; discuss with me **one week before the show**.
- Latest news only!
- Your report in class (10 points) should **at least include**:
  - new words and expressions
  - background information
  - news report (summary)
  - your comment on the news
  - your interaction with the audience
- After the report in class, **make changes if necessary**. Then **submit your report online** (3 points) and **give me your paper version as a group** (2 points).
- Bonus: **extra 2 points** for your creativity in delivering the presentation.

*Figure 5. The Project Assigned by the Teacher*

The students were expected to work in a group with 3 to 4 members. They were supposed to work collaboratively on reporting a latest news to the class. Their news reporting should include the following parts: explaining new words and expressions, introducing background information about the event they reported, giving a summary of the news they reported, and sharing their comments and thoughts on the news. The students were expected to
interact with the audience while presenting their project to the whole class. After the in-class presentation, they were expected to post their report online and respond to any questions or comments from their classmates. Their presentation would be evaluated and graded according to the contents of their news reporting, the presentation of the news report and in-class and online interactions. The teacher would give students bonus if they delivered the presentation in a creative way.

As is shown in Figure 5, the project was done out of the class time. The in-class time was used to present the project. Further discussion of the projected was carried out online after class. This project entailed the ability to solve problems and to cooperate with others. The students had to search for information from different sources such as newspapers, magazines, and the Internet. They had to analyze the information they had found and draw conclusions or express their own thoughts. In the whole process of completing the project, the students were required to use English. As the teacher Yu said, “These students have a narrow scope of knowledge, and they have difficulty in using English to talk about things like what is going on around us.” Therefore, the teacher Yu urged students to apply English in the process of completing the project. She also expected student to apply what they had learned in class to actually solve a problem.

The above description indicates that the teacher implemented the active classroom model in her English class, but she didn’t fully flip her English class. However, by moving the learning of vocabulary and grammar out of class time, the teacher devoted the in-class time to engaging students in a variety of activities, bringing vitality to the classroom. In addition, she engaged students in further thinking and learning with various tasks.

The Teacher’s Perspective on the Flipped Classroom Model
Since the teacher Yu only partly flipped her English class, I asked her how she perceived the use of the flipped classroom model in language teaching. She said that she was more of a traditional teacher. She was in favor of the idea of designing different tasks to guide students’ learning before class, in class and after class. However, she didn’t think that the same teaching model was effective for all disciplines. This can be shown in the following words she said:

No matter what teaching model a teacher adopts, he/she should take into consideration the students’ needs and the learning contents. It is not realistic to rely on the flipped classroom model to solve all the problems that has arisen in the teaching and learning of certain discipline, in particular, English. I won’t take the flipped classroom model as the single or major teaching model in my class. It’s not realistic to fully flip the learning of an article. The in-depth reading and comprehension of an article, especially one that is difficult for students to understand, cannot be done out of the class without immediate interaction with the teacher.

As was suggested by the Active Learning Classroom Teaching Reform Steering Group, teachers could adjust the sample teaching model according to the characteristics of the disciplines and the actual needs of the students. Teachers were also encouraged to create a teaching model that was the most effective in engaging students in active learning. The star teacher Yu did adjust the teaching model in her English class. She flipped the learning of vocabulary and grammar, while she stuck to the approach of lecturing when it came to text analysis of an article. However, her lecturing was quite different from that in a traditional classroom where the teacher dominates the talking in class and spends much time focusing on the learning of vocabulary and grammar. Instead, she acted as a guide, leading students to think and speak English.

**Students’ Perceptions of the Learning Experiences in the Flipped English Class**

In order to explore the effects of the flipped classroom model on students’ English learning and cultivation of higher order thinking skills, I conducted a multiple case study to inquire into undergraduate students’ perceptions of their experiences in a flipped English class. I
identified six second-year college students aged 19 to 20 years old to be my participants in the star teacher’s English class. With the data collected from interviews, classroom observation, journal entries, and students’ written or online assignments, I explored students’ perceptions of their learning experiences in the English class. In the following pages, I presented a case description for each of the student participants first, and finally generated common themes shared by these six student participants.

**Ruan Became More Autonomous and Active in Learning**

Ruan didn’t talk much during the interview, and I tried to elicit more information from her by using the prompt “Please tell me more about it”. However, she responded to my questions in a clear and concise manner. When I asked her how she perceived her learning experiences in this English class, she said that she became more autonomous and active in learning. This can be seen from the following remarks she made:

Different from the traditional English class in high school, this English class offers more chance for us to learn by ourselves. The teacher assigned a lot of learning tasks for us to complete on our own. Through doing the tasks, I have become more autonomous in learning. In the past, I lacked self-discipline in study, and I relied on the teacher to push me to study. Now I often do the pre-class assignments and exercises autonomously. The assignments and activities in class are diversified, and I am more active in learning than before.

**Language acquisition.** Ruan described the approach to teaching in this English class as “original” and she saw great changes in her way of learning English.

I was used to the traditional way of teaching and learning in high school before I attended this English class. My high school teacher did not assign so many learning tasks to us before class. I just read the news words listed in the textbook before class. The teacher did not expect us to learn words by ourselves. She taught us the vocabulary in class. I was forced to learn in the past. Sometimes the teacher would spend most of the time explaining grammar. I just listened and took notes. And I had to memorize the words and the grammatical rules. We often did homework related to vocabulary and grammar.

Ruan’s words show that in the traditional classroom, the teacher dominated the class and spent most of the time lecturing, with vocabulary and grammar as the focus. In the past, Ruan
learned English mainly through listening to the teacher and taking down notes in class and doing homework and memorizing words and grammatical rules after class. She got little chance to speak English in class.

According to Ruan, the teaching model in this college English class was “original” and new to her. With regard to the learning of vocabulary and grammar, she made the following remarks:

The teacher in this class asked us to look up new words and fill in the word map before class. I had to write down the pronunciation of a new word, its derivatives, its synonyms and antonyms. It was time-consuming. I am an impatient people. But I learned more. We were also required to complete a worksheet. The first part of it was an explanation of a grammatical point. Then an example was given to illustrate how to use it. Next, related exercises were offered. The teacher would pick out the grammatical point with high error rate to explain in class. Then I understand the grammatical point better.

The above quote shows that the learning of new vocabulary and grammatical points was moved out of the class. Ruan found this task challenging but beneficial, because she could enlarge her vocabulary and have a better command of the grammatical points.

In addition, the pre-class task of reading and understanding the assigned article prepared Ruan for in-class study.

Our teacher asked us to read the article, learn new words, and ponder over questions related to the article. When I was well-prepared, I could understand what the teacher was saying. The teacher gave us a lot of opportunities to speak English in class, like group discussion, brainstorming, role play, and so on. We were interested in the varied activities, and we became more active. However, my oral English is not good, so I dare not speak English most of the time. But I would answer questions if they were not difficult.

With the initial reading and learning of the article before class, Ruan found it much easier to follow what the teacher was saying in class. In class, the teacher offered a lot of opportunities to speak English with various kinds of activities, which triggered Ruan’s interest in learning. Although Ruan still hesitated to speak English in class due to her low proficiency in English, she tried to answer questions that were not difficult to her. “I become more active in class, and I
learn to apply what I have learned to in-class activities; I learned new knowledge through communicating with my teacher and my classmates in English,” said Ruan.

**Cultivation of higher order thinking skills.** Ruan claimed that she got a lot of opportunities to cultivate her higher order thinking skills in this English class. Two specific examples she described were the English-to-Chinese sentence translation work and the project of news reporting.

The sentence translation work before class was challenging to her. This can be seen from the words she wrote in her journal entry as follows:

Some sentences are long and difficult, sometimes as long as three or four lines. Even if you know all the words, it will be difficult to translate the sentences smoothly. My translation skills are not particularly strong, and sentences are difficult to translate smoothly. First of all, I will take a general look, understand the structure and meaning of the sentence as a whole, and sort out the difficult parts. Then see if there are unknown or unfamiliar words. I need to pay attention to whether the word is polysemous.

The above quotes show that Ruan tried to analyze the structure and the meaning of one English sentence and thought of appropriate words to be used in translation. She said in the interview that the teacher would pick out and discuss in class about several sentences that many students had failed to translate in a correct way.

The teacher discussed with us the translation of some difficult sentences with high error rate. She showed us several translations of the same sentence and led us to think about which translation was better.

Ruan’s words showed that instead of giving students a satisfactory version of translation, the teacher usually engaged students in classroom discussion about several translations of the same sentence. In the process of completing the translation work, she applied what she had learned and learned through interaction with her teacher and peers. She wrote in one journal entry, “After completing this assignment, I acquired the skills of logical thinking and language organization.”
Ruan described in both the interview and the journal entry another specific task that fostered the cultivation of higher order thinking skills, i.e. the project of news reporting. She said that the project was a group work and they did the project on their own. She described how doing the project helped cultivate higher order thinking skills as below:

Take the project of news reporting as an example. We searched for related information, and analyzed the information in group, which enhanced our ability to analyze problems. In the process of searching for information, I learned more and trained my thinking skills. In group discussion, I found that everyone had his or her own way of thinking and analyzed the same problem from different perspectives. I learned to think about a problem from different perspectives. When we presented our project in class, we would show different views on the news we reported, for example the views we got from the Internet. We also made our own comments on the news and explained why we held such views. Our teacher would offer us her opinion, but she never imposed her views on us.

The above description shows that by doing the project collaboratively with her group members, Ruan learned to think differently and critically and make her own judgment. She wrote in her journal entry the following statement about the benefits she had got from the project: “I learned from the completion of this assignment the ability to analyze problems rationally, and to see and analyze problems and solve problems from the perspective of others.”

**Benefits and challenges.** Ruan said she benefited a lot from this English class, but she was also faced with some challenges in English learning.

One benefit that Ruan mentioned from time to time during the interview was that she became more autonomous in learning. Through doing the pre-class learning tasks, Ruan learned to discipline herself in study and became more autonomous in learning. In high school, she seldom learned English autonomously. As she said, “In the past, I lacked self-discipline in study, and I relied on the teacher to push me to study.” The teacher moved the learning of vocabulary and grammar out of class, and required students to carry out initial learning of the article to be analyzed in class. “The teacher provides us with more opportunities to learn by ourselves, and this helped me to develop the habit of learning autonomously,” commented Ruan.
Another benefit Ruan described was that she became more active in class and got courage to speak English in class.

There are a lot of opportunities for us to speak English in this class. When we discuss questions and express our views, we are expected to speak English. We are expected to present our projects in English. The teacher guides us to think and encourages us to speak English by giving us bonus in grades. I am a bit passive in learning, being silent in class most of the time, but I am more active and confident than before. Now I have courage to speak English in class, though not very often.

Ruan’s words show that the teacher expected students to actively participate in any classroom activities. In order to live up to the teacher’s expectation, she started to open her mouth and speak English. Gradually, she became more confident and had the courage to speak English in class.

However, Ruan was faced with some challenges in this English class.

It was difficult for me to adapt to the all-English learning environment. My former English teachers used a lot of Chinese in class. I am still not proficient in English listening skills, so it is a bit difficult for me to follow the teacher in this class. I have to spend time practicing my English listening after class. I have been trying to be accustomed to the way of teaching in this class. Besides, the teacher required us to discuss questions in English. My oral English is not good. I raised my hand only when the questions being discussed were easy to answer. Since the teacher asked us to volunteer to answer questions, we are inclined to answer questions that are not beyond our ability. In this way, we can become more confident.

The above quotes show that due to her low proficiency in the English listening and speaking skills, she had difficulty in understanding all that the teacher was saying in class, and she kept silent when the questions raised by the teacher or her peers were beyond her ability.

Despite the challenges, Ruan seemed to benefit from the teaching model in this English class, for she said, “I learned more in this class; I made progress in many aspects, such as my English listening and speaking skills, problem-solving skill, and so on.” She added in member-checking, “The most valuable feature of this English class was that the teacher assigned a lot of learning tasks to be completed on our own. I have become more autonomous in learning.”
Zhen Got a Sense of Achievement

Zhen looked confident. She regarded herself as an autonomous learner. She claimed to get a sense of achievement in this partly flipped English class. “You can benefit a lot from this class if you are willing to learn,” she stated.

**Language acquisition.** “In this college English class, I feel that we students are the dominators of the class, exploring knowledge together with our teacher.” Zhen’s words triggered my interest in how she perceived the English teaching and learning in this English class.

What impressed me most was Zhen’s perception of the roles of the teacher and the students in this English class.

Our teacher is not the dominator of the class; she is a participant in our learning, and we explore knowledge together. She does not give standard answers to us directly. Instead, she usually gives us some guidance and asks us to think independently. My high school English teacher did not give us much time pondering over questions; she told us the answers directly. That was because she needed to finish to teaching tasks within the first two years of our high school life so that we could focus on reviewing work and preparing for the college entrance examinations. The teacher in this English class engages us in a variety of activities, giving us a lot of opportunities to speak English in class. My high school teacher focused on vocabulary and grammar, and gave us a lot of exam papers to do, urging us to memorize vocabulary and grammatical rules. The teacher in this college English class guides us to think. I feel that we students are the dominators and explore new knowledge with the teacher. We analyze articles together by discussing questions, and we have plenty of opportunities to speak English.

The above quotes indicate that Zhen viewed the role of the teacher in this college English class as a participant in students’ English learning rather than a dominator. The teacher never dominated the talking in class; instead the teacher gave them plenty of opportunities to speak English with various kinds of activities. The English teacher in high school dominated the class by lecturing most of the time, with focus on vocabulary and grammar. However, in this college English class, the teacher created an active learning environment for students.
**Cultivation of higher order thinking skills.** Zhen thought that this English class provided a lot of opportunities to cultivate her higher order thinking skills. This can be shown in the following remarks she made:

We got a lot of chance to use English. For instance, when we discussed questions in class, we needed to organize our words and express our ideas in English. We also learned to analyze and solve problems. When doing role play, we discussed together about how to write a play, and after we finished writing the play, we had to act it out in English. We had to be creative in the whole process of completing the role play as well. When doing the project, we analyzed the information about a piece of news together. We also exchanged our views on how we should present our projects. Another example is the sentence translation work. Our teacher read through our translations before class and picked several translations to be discussed in class. She also offered us her own translation, but she did not expect us to take her version of translation as the standard answer. She led us to think critically and discuss the differences among the different translations. She expected us to make our own judgment about which translation was better.

Zhen’s words show that she cultivated her higher order thinking skills through participating in in-class activities and completing tasks out of class. The teacher assigned an assortment of learning tasks which required them to use English, either orally or in written form. In addition, she learned to analyze and solve problems through doing the learning tasks assigned by the teacher.

**Benefits and challenges.** “In this class, I take the initiative to learn and get a sense of achievement”. Zhen claimed to have got a lot of benefits in this English class. She regarded herself as an autonomous learner, and she said she learned a lot through completing the learning tasks under the guidance of the teacher. She specifically pointed out her growth in the class as follows:

First, I have become more confident. I got many opportunities to speak English and share my views in class. I also got chance to show the work my classmates and I created together, such as making up a story and presenting it by role play, presenting our project, and so on. After seizing the chance to speak English in front of the class for several times, I gradually became more confident. Now, unlike the first time I spoke in front of the class, I am no longer timid and shy. Second, I cultivated my critical thinking skills. Through discussion with my classmates and doing the project of news reporting, I learned...
that sometimes there was no absolutely right or wrong answer to a question. There was no single definite standard answer.

Zhen said that she became more confident, because she got many opportunities to express her views in class and to show the work created in collaboration with her peers. In addition, she claimed that she cultivated her critical thinking through group discussion and doing projects.

The only challenge she mentioned was that she had difficulty in responding to the teacher’s questions quickly in English.

My oral English is not proficient enough. When the teacher raised some questions, I could not respond to them quickly. Even though I could answer the questions in Chinese, I needed time to think about how to translate my answers into English. My teacher suggested that I spend 15 minutes reading an English article every day, and compare my reading with the audio recording of the article in standard English. As long as I keep reading articles and practicing my oral English, gradually I will make progress. I will follow my teacher’s suggestion and improve my English. I am autonomous in learning.

Zhen’s words show that the challenge she met was due to the fact that she could not think in English; whenever a question was raised, she thought of the answer in Chinese and then tried to translate it into English. However, this challenge appeared not to bother her, for she told me with confidence that she believed that she would improve her oral English by reading English articles and practicing oral English as was advised by the teacher.

Being autonomous and confident in learning, Zhen appeared to enjoy learning in this English class. The flipped learning tasks helped her to be well-prepared for the active learning in class. Zhen perceived her English learning experiences in this class as satisfactory. She stated that one could learn a lot from this class as long as he/she was willing to learn. She herself got a sense of achievement in this English class.

**Yue Cultivated an Interest in English Learning**

Yue impressed me with her sweet smile when I first met her. She was informative in the interview, willing to share with me her thoughts. Yue told me that she became more interested
in learning English in this class, for she felt that she could internalize knowledge right in class.

“Thanks to the teaching model the teacher adopted, I can learn more knowledge and grasp the new knowledge right in class,” stated Yue.

**Language acquisition.** Yue regarded the practice of moving the learning of grammar out of class brought some as “helpful”. This can be shown in her follow comments:

The teacher would assign some learning tasks before class. For example, she offered us a worksheet in which there were explanations of certain grammatical points and exercises related to them, and some questions related to the article we were going to learn. The worksheet was helpful to me for I could read the materials repeatedly at my own pace. After learning the grammatical points by myself, I did the exercises to see whether I grasped those grammatical points. The teacher would explain some of the grammatical points that most of us did not understand well. I think this way of learning grammar is good. I can learn more and get a better command of the grammatical points.

Yue’s words show that the worksheet designed by the teacher was helpful to her in learning English grammar. She could learn the grammatical points better for she could learn at her own speed and review the materials from time to time. She added, “The teacher didn’t spend much time on teaching grammar, for she expected us to learn grammar by ourselves; however, I learned more.”

As to the vocabulary learning, Yue made the following remarks:

The word map offered by our teacher guided us how to learn words. We had to look up a new word based on the template of the word map…its derivatives, antonyms, synonyms and sample sentences, etc. I think this is good. I don’t know how to use the word if I simply memorize the word. If I write down the sample sentence, I know how the word can be used. Learning vocabulary by ourselves in this way, I can get a deeper impression of the new words.

Yue wrote in her journal entry that it was time-consuming to complete the word maps. However, she held that the template of word map served as a great guidance in learning new words. She realized that learning a new word did not simply means rote memorizing the spelling and meaning of a new word like what she had done in high school. Through searching for
antonyms and synonyms of the new word and learning the word within certain context, she learned to use the word and enlarged her vocabulary.

Since the teacher did not spend much time explaining new words and grammar, students got more opportunities to speak English in class. However, Yue said that not everyone in class seize the opportunities to speak English in class. She sometimes tried to be the one who broke the ice in class. “If the teacher raised a question and no one answered it, it would be rather embarrassing,” she said. In order to engage students in speaking English in class, the teacher required that every student should volunteer to answer questions for at least five times during the semester. Yue thought of this requirement as “helpful”, because in order to meet this requirement, everyone in class began to raise their hands and speak English in class. Gradually, she found that even though some of her peers had met the requirement, they still continued to raise their hands in class. Influenced by her peers, she became more actively engaging in classroom activities and developed an interest in learning English. “Whenever my classmates raise their hands, I also raise my hands; I have a sense of competition, and my active participation in class activities was partly due to peer influence,” said Yue.

Moreover, Yue said that she was motivated to learn English well, for she planned to pursue her study abroad. She thought that the teaching model adopted by the teacher helped her learn English efficiently. She explained this with the following remarks:

The biggest benefit I got in this class was that I was able to acquire new knowledge every time I attended the class. In high school, I reviewed and absorbed what I had learned after class. In contrast, in this college English class, thanks to the teaching model the teacher adopted, I can learn more knowledge and grasp the new knowledge right in class. When I was in high school, I learned mainly by listening to the teacher and taking notes. In this college English class, I was well-prepared for the in-class learning, and the teacher mainly guided us to learn and encouraged us to think. I like this college English class better, because I can acquire new knowledge right in class.
The above quotes show that through completing the pre-class learning tasks, Yue was well-prepared for the learning in class. Yue said that the teacher usually guided students to think and engaged them in a variety of learning activities. Therefore, she got the chance to apply what she had learned before class and learned new knowledge through interacting with her teacher and peers.

**Cultivation of higher order thinking skills.** Yue pointed out that she got a lot of chance to apply what she had learned both in class and after class, for the teacher assigned various kinds of learning tasks to assist her in learning. Moreover, she improved her critical thinking skill in this English class. Yue said that the teacher often engaged them in group discussion. Through exchanging ideas with her classmates and the teacher, she learned to think critically. For instance, the teacher once started a discussion about the act of hunting for whales. “Most of my classmates were opposed to hunting for whales; however, we heard a different voice from one classmate that it was a good thing from the perspective of striking a balance in the biological chain.” She learned that there was no single standard answer to a certain question, and that she should think critically rather than accepting one so-called right answer.

**Benefits and challenges.** Learning English with the guidance from the teacher in this class, Yue claimed to have benefited a lot. She said that every learning task assigned by the teacher was “meaningful”. This is revealed in the following remarks she made:

I gained a larger vocabulary by learning words with the word map. I improved my critical thinking skills through classroom discussion and doing the project with my classmates. In addition, I feel that every one of us has become more courageous than before. Some of my classmates are very shy. They don’t like raising their hands in class. However, the teacher required that everyone should volunteer to answer questions in class. She compelled every one of us to participate in the presentation of projects. Some classmates were afraid of making a speech in class, but the teacher said, “You must participate in the presentation.” After taking the challenge that we had thought of as difficult to handle, we found that that was not a big deal.
Yue’s words show that she gained a lot of benefits in this English class. Following the guidance in the word map, she gained a larger vocabulary. Engaging in classroom discussion and doing projects with her classmates, she learned to think critically. Compelled to speak English in front of the class, many students became more courageous than before.

However, Yue also met some challenges. She described her challenges as below:

It is time-consuming and tiring to learn new words with the word map. Once I spent three hours writing my word map. It is tiring work, but it is helpful. As a saying goes, “The palest ink is better than the best memory.” Though this task involves a lot of work, it is meaningful. Another challenge is the group work. Someone was unwilling to cooperate. She just didn’t do the work. I felt frustrated, but I could not criticize her. After all, she was my classmate. The teacher would give us grades according to our devotion to the work, but she expected us to solve the problem by ourselves. Besides, learning grammar on my own was difficult for me sometimes. I had to learn and review the materials for several times while I was doing the exercises.

Yue’s description indicates that she viewed the flipped learning of vocabulary as “tiring” but “meaningful”. The flipped learning of English grammar was sometimes challenging for her. Moreover, she felt frustrated when someone in her group was not cooperative and did not want to participate in the group work. Although the teacher would give different grades to individual students according to their performance, she expected them to solve the problem by themselves.

The above description shows that Yue regarded the flipped learning tasks of vocabulary and grammar as challenging. However, she was motivated to learn English and developed an interest in learning English in this class.

**Hua Raised Her Hand More Frequently in Class**

Hua appeared to be shy in the interview, and in order to get more information, I kept using prompts like “Please tell me more about it” and “Please describe a specific example”. Hua regarded herself as a “passive learner”, but she stated, “Because of the active learning atmosphere in the classroom, I raised my hand more frequently.”
Language acquisition. “I am passive in learning, because my English is not good.” Hua appeared not to be confident in learning English. The following is Hua’s description of how she learned English in this college English class:

I learned English through completing the assignments and tasks given by the teacher. Before class, I read the article in the textbook, learned new works, and took a look at the other pre-class learning materials, like videos, materials related the article, and the worksheet. I looked up new words according to the template given by the teacher. The teacher would pick some key words to teach to us in class. I read the article and tried to understand it before class. I learned the grammatical points listed in the worksheet and did the related exercises.

Hua benefited from the practice of moving the learning of vocabulary and grammar out of class, for she could learn at her own pace and get a deeper understanding of the new words and grammatical points with the guidance from the teacher. She wrote in her journal entry the following comment on the vocabulary learning task: “Learning vocabulary based on the word map helped me understand the new words better”. She also commented on the assignment of learning grammar in her journal entry, saying “This assignment can help me understand grammar more thoroughly and expand my vocabulary.”

Hua described her learning experiences in this English class as “wonderful”. She shared with me her perceptions of learning English in this class as below:

I had a wonderful experience in this class. The teacher was good at engaging students in active learning. I have become more interested in learning English, because this English class adopts an original teaching model and it is more diversified than that in high school. In high school, the English teacher focused on explaining words and the contents of an article, and we took notes. We did not have pre-class learning tasks. The way of teaching in this class is original, creating a more active learning environment. Because of the active learning atmosphere in the classroom, I raised my hand more frequently.

The above quotes show that Hua thought of the college English classroom as more “active” and “diversified” than that in high school. With greater interest in English learning and under the influence of the active learning atmosphere, she began to raise her hand and engage herself in active learning.
**Cultivation of higher order thinking skills.** Hua did not mention her growth in higher order thinking skills, but she acknowledged that the learning activities and tasks offered by the teacher gave students opportunities to learn higher order thinking skills.

The teacher often left questions to us and urged us to think independently. She offered pre-class learning materials to us and asked us to think about some questions independently. She also raised questions in class. She guided us to think and express our own views in English. For example, when learning a piece of narration, she would ask us to make comments on the main characters in the story. The teacher wouldn’t give us a standard answer. Instead, she guided us to think independently and make our own judgment. While doing the project of news reporting, we were expected to analyze a piece of news and make our own comments on the news. This assignment entailed the ability to analyze and solve problems.

Hua’s words indicate that she and her classmates were urged by the teacher to speak English in class. She was guided by the teacher to think independently and critically in classroom discussion. The group work of news reporting trained their ability to analyze and solve problems.

**Benefits and challenges.** The most valuable feature of this English class was the “active learning environment in the classroom”. Hua said she benefited from the way of teaching and learning English in this class. This is revealed in the following remarks she made:

The teacher in this class required us to speak English in class. I needed to participate in discussion, and present our group project in class. Gradually, I got courage to speak English in class. The pre-class learning tasks, for instance, learning new words and grammatical points, helped me better understand the article assigned by the teacher. The task of reading and understanding the article before class prepared me for the in-class learning. I could understand what the teacher was saying. It was easier for me to follow the teacher’s steps. I could get a deeper understanding of the article. Moreover, since the teacher created an all-English environment, I practiced my English listening and speaking in class.

Hua’s words show the benefits she got from this college English class. She got courage to speak English within the active learning environment in class. The pre-class learning tasks prepared her for the in-class learning activities. She found it easier to follow the teacher in class when she came to class prepared. Moreover, she improved her English listening and speaking
skills in this class because the teacher used English all the time and urged students to speak English in class.

Nevertheless, Hua felt it challenging to learn English in this all-English environment. She said, “I like the teaching model adopted by the teacher; the difficulty I face in my study is caused by my incompetence in English listening and speaking abilities.” Hua said she raised her hand and spoken English only when the questions raised were easy to answer.

**Jia Enjoyed the Chance to Be a “Teacher” and “Speaker” in Class**

Jia had a keen interest in learning English. He wanted to be a teacher in the future, and thus he was motivated to seize every opportunity to practice speaking English in class. He claimed to enjoy his learning experiences in this English class because he enjoyed the opportunities to be a “teacher” and “speaker” in class.

**Language acquisition.** Jia regarded the way of teaching in this English class as “original”. He said that unlike his English teacher in high school who dominated the class, the teacher in this college English class was more like a “friend”, a “participant” and a “guide” to the students. He made the following comments on this college English class:

The teaching model in this English class is quite original, with much more activities than those in high school. The teacher not only imparts knowledge to us, but she also encourages and guides us to think. She gives us chance to be a teacher in class, such as presenting our news report to the class. I want to be a teacher in the future, and I cherish every opportunity to be a speaker in front of the class. I think we students dominate the class most of the time, and this brings vitality to the classroom.

Jia’s words show that he got a lot of chance to speak English in class. Jia regarded himself as an autonomous learner. According to him, the learning tasks before class were good for enhancing his autonomy in learning. The word map provided by the teacher guided him to learn new words in a proper way. “In high school, I mechanically memorized the spelling and meaning of a new word, but now I learn more under the guidance of the word map offered by our
teacher.” Jia also wrote in his journal entry about how he perceived the vocabulary learning in this class, “I’ve learnt a new way of learning new words; maybe it is suitable for me.”

Similarly, learning grammar at his own pace with the materials and exercises provided by the teacher helped him to get a better command of English grammar, as is shown in the following words he said in the interview:

I learned grammatical rules and did related exercises before class. This pre-class learning task improved my ability to learn by myself, and enhanced my autonomy in learning.

Jia also commented in his journal entry on the grammar learning in this class as below:

This is one of our homework, and it’s all about grammar. Although we have already learnt these grammar in high school, we still don’t have better command of them. This homework helps enhance my grammatical knowledge.

Although Jia still made grammatical errors in his writing, he thought that he had got a better command of English grammar by doing the assignment related to grammar.

The most valuable feature of this English class, according to Jia, was the active learning environment in the classroom. He described his perceptions of the English learning in this English class as below:

There were many opportunities for us to speak English in class. With a variety of activities, the classroom was full of vitality, and we became more active in class. I could not only learn new knowledge about the English language, but I also learned how to make a speech and how to present my project to the audience in a proper way. I became more attentive in class, and I was more autonomous in completing the learning tasks.

Jia’s words show that he enjoyed the opportunities to speak English in class. The learning task he loved most was the project of news reporting. He said, “The assignment of making a presentation is original and new to me; I like to be a teacher, and I felt that I was like a teacher while making a presentation.” He cherished the chance to speak English and share his ideas to his teacher and fellow students.
Cultivation of higher order thinking skills. Jia acknowledged that this English class abounded with opportunities to cultivate his higher order thinking skills. He said that the teacher organized a variety of activities which entailed the application of what he had learned about English such as vocabulary and grammar. He got many opportunities to use English to express his thoughts. Even when most of the in-class time was devoted to text analysis of an article, the teacher guided students to think analytically and encouraged students to speak English.

Jia mentioned the project of news reporting again as an example to show how his higher order thinking skills were cultivated. “Every group is inclined to think of a new and creative way to present their news report.” Jia said every group tried to be creative when presenting a news in front of the class: “Some group presented a news by giving the class a listening practice, some group made a speech and some presented a news by role play.” In addition, Jia learned to think critically when doing the project with his group members. “We didn’t take the news at its face value; instead we tried to dig deeper into the news, trying to figure out the causes lying behind the news,” stated Jia. Jia added that completing the project also helped him to improve his problem-solving skills. He and his group members had to make a plan for the project, and then carried out the plan collaboratively.

Benefits and challenges. Jia claimed to benefit a lot from the active learning environment in this English class. “Since the classroom is full of vitality, I am more attentive and active in class, and my autonomy in learning has been enhanced in this class as well,” remarked Jia. Another benefit he highlighted was the improvement of his speaking skills. “I have got a lot of chances to speak English in class, so I have greatly improved my oral English.” Moreover, Jia said that through presenting news reports to his fellow students, he learned how to make a speech in an effective way.
Jia deemed the teaching model in this class as “original”, and he saw every learning task as “meaningful”. However, he claimed that he was also faced with some challenges. The first challenge was that he had difficulty in getting an in-depth understanding of an article. “When I learn an article by myself, I usually get a superficial understanding of the article,” said Jia, “but I learned to think more deeply with the guidance from the teacher in class.” Jia added he needed to learn to raise more questions and improve his critical thinking in order to improve his learning experiences in this English class. The second challenge Jia claimed to encounter in this English class was to complete a project and present it in class in an effective and creative way. However, Jia acknowledged that this challenging task was beneficial to him for he learned to work in collaboration with others and think in an analytic and critical way.

**Gang Valued the Traditional Teaching Model**

Gang was a highly motivated English learner, for he clearly stated his determination to learn English well. “I plan to further my study either at home or abroad; English is an important tool, and I have to learn it well,” remarked Gang. Among the six student participants, Gang was the only one that valued the traditional way of teaching and learning English, for he articulated that even though the teaching model the teacher adopted brought vitality to class, it was still necessary to value the traditional approach to language teaching and learning.

**Language acquisition.** Gang thought of the teacher’s guidance as important in his learning. This can be seen from his remarks as follows:

I’m not autonomous enough in learning, and I usually study by following the instructions from the teacher. I am inexperienced, so I might make mistakes. The teacher’s experiential guidance is important for me. The teacher’s guidance shows me what I should do and how I should learn. I just follow the teacher’s instructions and cooperate with the teacher to complete all the assignments.

Gang regarded the teacher as an important guide while he was learning English. He learned how to learn new words on his own with the word map offered by the teacher. Yet he
thought that he learned more when the teacher elaborated on the use of some new words in class.

This was revealed in his words below:

The teacher explained the use of a new word in detail, which helped me get a deeper understanding of the new word. I got to know that some words were polysemous. Learning words with the word map involves a lot of work, but this assignment is helpful. How helpful it is depends on how we make use of this assignment. The word map brings limited help to me if I take it simply as an assignment; it is most helpful when I review and memorize words.

Gang’s words show that he acknowledged the value of the way of learning vocabulary in class; however, the effectiveness of learning vocabulary with the word map depends on students’ attitude toward this assignment.

Gang mentioned that in learning vocabulary, dictation was the most effective in helping him learn words. This can be shown in the following remarks he made:

Dictation is the most effective task in helping me learn new words. I am motivated to learn when I get some pressure from the teacher. My high school teacher didn’t make us learn new words by ourselves. The teacher taught us words in class in the morning, and she would carry out the dictation in the evening class the same day or in the next morning. My classmates and I were pushed to memorize vocabulary. We learn more in this college English class, and the teacher carries out dictation when we finish learning one unit of the textbook. Dictation in this class is much more difficult than that in high school. My high school teacher dictated words by telling us the meanings of the words in Chinese. In contrast, the teacher in this class usually dictates words by offering the initial letters and paraphrasing the words.

The above quotes show that Gang thought of dictation as an effective means to motivate him to learn and memorize words. Dictation in the college English class was more challenging than that in high school. In addition, the teacher in the college English class had higher expectations for students. She guided students to grasp the use of the word rather than simply memorizing its Chinese meaning.

Gang said that interactions occurred more often in this college English class than in the traditional English class in high school.
My high school teacher seldom interacted with students in class, but the teacher in this class offered a lot of opportunities for interactions. In high school, the teacher spent most of the time lecturing and seldom asked students to answer questions, expecting us to listen attentively. In this college English class, we have to volunteer to answer questions by raising our hands. Whenever there were some questions related to one paragraph in an article, our teacher asked us to discuss with each other and answer the questions.

Gang’s words show that this college English class differed from the traditional English class in that the teacher paid much attention to interacting with students and engaging students in speaking English in class.

The learning tasks after class took different forms. Gang said sometimes the teacher left more questions related to an article for them to discuss with each other after class. The discussion sometimes occurred on a forum opened by the teacher online. In addition, the teacher assigned projects for students to do on their own and asked them to present the projects in class. With various learning tasks, Gang said that he had more chance to interact with his classmates and the teacher in this class.

**Cultivation of higher order thinking skills.** Gang acknowledged that there were opportunities for cultivating higher order thinking skills in this English class. Since the teacher constantly engaged students in discussion and thinking in class, Gang learned to use English to express his ideas, and he was guided and inspired by both his teacher and classmates to think critically.

When discussing questions with my classmates, I was amazed by the different ways of thinking. Our teacher also shared with us her views, but she never gave us one definite standard answer. She always encourages us to think.

Gang said he learned to analyze a problem from different perspectives through interacting with his teacher and classmates. In addition, Gang said he improved his critical thinking and problem-solving skills by doing projects collaboratively with his classmates.

We did a project of news reporting in group. Every group was expected to select a piece of news to share in class. We picked a news and found a lot of information online.
However, the teacher only gave us twenty to twenty-five minutes to present our project, so we needed to delete the useless information. We discussed with each other and drew a mind map. With a focus as the center, we extended the mind map and then deleted the information that we did not need. Then we divided the work. Each of us as responsible for one part. We analyzed the news, made our own comments and prepared a PowerPoint to present the news report to the class. It was not an easy job.

The above quotes show that the project was a task done by students themselves. In completing the project, Gang and his group members learned to analyze and solve problems. They also learned to cooperate with each other.

**Benefits and challenges.** Gang mentioned both the benefits he had got and the challenges he had met in this English class. Since the teacher created an all-English active learning environment in class, Gang felt that he had greatly improved his English listening and speaking skills. “I am more confident in communicating with foreigners in English now.” Gang appeared happy about such growth. Another benefit he got from this class was that he learned to think about a question from different perspectives. He was amazed at the different ways his classmates presented their news reports. As Gang remarked, “Some of my classmates made use of the Internet instead of PowerPoint to present their news report, which brought me to a new world and broadened my horizon.”

Gang also met some challenges in learning English in this class. He described the challenges he had met as follows:

Most of my classmates actively participated in classroom discussion. Sometimes I could not respond to the teacher’s questions as quickly as my classmates did, so I lost the chance to air my view. When the teacher led us to analyze an article, some of the questions the teacher raised were difficult to me. I could not understand the questions in class, so I needed to discuss the questions with my teacher or my classmates after class. I did not ask for help right in class, because I did not want to interrupt the teacher’s teaching.

The above description showed the challenges Gang met in his studies. He said sometimes he lost the chance to answer questions in class because he could not respond to a
question as quickly as his classmates did. This also shows that students in this English class were actively engaged in learning in class. In addition, he felt that some questions involved in the in-depth analysis of an article were difficult and he needed further discussion with his classmates or the teacher in order to fully understand them. Another challenge Gang met was related to the pre-class learning tasks and after-class reviewing work.

I felt that I did not do well in the pre-class assignments. If I had sufficient time to do the pre-class learning tasks, I finished 80% of the assignments. If I did not have enough time, I completed around 60% of the assignments. I simply read the article and look up new words, but I did not ponder over the questions related to the article. After learning one unit, I did badly in the reviewing work.

Gang admitted that he did not do well in the pre-class assignments when there was not sufficient time; and he did not persist in doing the reviewing work after class, which hindered his progress in learning English.

Although Gang acknowledged the benefits brought about by the active learning environment in this English class, he said by the end of the interview that he was more accustomed to the traditional way of teaching and learning. The movable desks and chairs in the smart classroom helped create a relaxing learning environment, but he felt that he would be more attentive and devoted to learning in a traditional classroom with seats fixed in rows. Gang valued the traditional way of learning English by rote learning words and articles, and he hoped that the teacher could make this a must so that he would be motivated to do it. This was indicated by his words below:

I think the objective of this course is to understand the articles and learn vocabulary. I think the traditional way of learning English, that is reading and memorizing, might be more effective. The teacher in this class pays much attention to guiding us to think, and she has never required us to recite articles. I only recited the long sentences assigned by the teacher in translation assignments. It would be better if the teacher could compel us to recite articles.
Gang articulated that the traditional way of teaching and learning English should be valued. He also recognized the value of the new teaching model in this English class, for he had seen growth in his English listening and speaking skills as well as his way of thinking. However, he said he was used to the traditional teaching model, and he thought doing exercises related to exams was important. “Examinations can determine many things, like the chance to further education at home or abroad.” Gang suggested that the teacher arrange a specific time for students to practice oral English. He hoped that the teacher could stick to the traditional way of lecturing most of the time.

**Cross-Case Analysis of Students’ Perceptions of the Learning Experiences in the Flipped English Class**

Although all the six student participants were learning English in the same teacher’s English class, they differed from each other regarding their perceptions of their learning experiences in this partly flipped English class. With different personalities and English levels, these students witnessed their growth in somewhat different aspects. Despite the differences, they shared common themes with regard to their perceptions of the learning experiences in this partly flipped English class. Being an observer, I made a comparison across the six participants with focus on their shared perceptions of their English learning experiences in the star teacher’s English class.

**Language Acquisition**

Learning English in the same teacher’s English class, all the six participants had similar perceptions of the way of English learning. All of them compared this college English class with the more traditional English class they had experienced in high school. They all described their
perceptions of some specific features in this college English class, i.e. the flipped learning before class, the student-centered active learning in class, and the group work of doing projects.

**Flipped learning.** All the six students mentioned the pre-class learning tasks of learning vocabulary and grammar under the guidance from the teacher. The teacher offered them a template of word map to guide them to learn new words on their own. All the six students mentioned that guided by the word map, they realized that learning a new word did not simply mean memorizing its spelling and Chinese meaning. Instead, they should grasp the use of the new word, and meanwhile they could enlarge their vocabulary by learning the derivatives, synonyms and antonyms of the new word. They all acknowledged that they learned how to learn new words from this learning task.

In addition, the teacher offered them a worksheet guiding them to learn English grammar on their own. Although the flipped learning of English might be challenging for some students, they got help from the teacher who would explain the grammatical points that she found were difficult for most of the students. Students could also seek help from the teacher individually. The six student participants all regarded the flipped learning of English grammar as helpful, for they could learn at their own pace, and with the exercises in the worksheet and the additional grammar exercises done in class, they got a better command of the grammatical points.

Moreover, before learning an article, they were required to read and understand the article before class. The teacher raised questions in the worksheet to assist the students in understanding the article. All the six participants thought of this assignment as helpful. With the initial reading and understanding of the article carried out before class, the students were prepared for in-class learning. They could also bring questions to class for discussion and
clarification. Through interacting with the teacher and their classmates, the six student participants said that they got a better understanding of the article.

**Student-centered active learning in class.** Based on the above case descriptions of the six student participants, one typical feature of the star teacher’s English class was the student-centered active learning environment in class.

All the six students mentioned how different this college English class was from that in high school. The descriptions of the traditional way of English teaching and learning in high school by the six student participants were pretty similar. In the traditional English classroom in their high schools, the teachers dominated the class by doing most of the talking, with focus on teaching vocabulary and grammar and translating the article being learned. In contrast, the teacher in this college English class expected students to learn vocabulary and grammar out of class time, and she devoted the in-class time to a variety of activities that engaged students in active learning.

All the six students said they had a lot of opportunities to interact with the teacher and their classmates, and they were required to speak English in class. Even when the teacher was teaching the article in class, she guided students to analyze the article together, and encouraged them to think and express their ideas in English. All the six students claimed to have benefited from the active learning environment in the classroom, though their growth in this English class varied.

**Group work.** The learning tasks after class took different forms. One task that all the six students described both in the interview and in their journal entries was the group work of doing projects. The project they specifically described was news reporting. Most of the student participants, i.e. Jia, Zhen, Yue, Gang and Ruan, regarded the project as the most valuable
learning task to them. They learned to work collaboratively in the group work. In the process of completing the project, they learned from each other by exchanging views on the same piece of news, and cooperated with each other in presenting the news report. While writing the news report and presenting the news report, they were required to use English. All the participants said they had benefited from doing the project for they learned to think critically and improved their English speaking skills.

**Cultivation of Higher Order Thinking Skills**

As was described in the case descriptions, all the students acknowledged that there were a lot of opportunities to cultivate their higher order thinking skills.

Their English learning in this college English class did not simply focus on remembering and understanding vocabulary and grammar. Instead, they were given much chance to use English in writing or speaking both in and out of class. They learned to apply the vocabulary and the grammatical rules they had learned to express their ideas. All the students said they had improved their English speaking skills by participating in the in-class discussions and presenting their projects. In addition, all the student participants mentioned that through in-class discussions with the teacher and peers, they learned to think critically. The teacher never gave them one single standard answer, but she encouraged them to think independently and critically.

The project of news reporting was also raised as an example by all the six students to demonstrate how their higher order thinking skills were improved. This project entailed their ability to search and select information and their capability of analyzing a problem and making their own judgment. They learned to think critically in the process of completing the project. Moreover, they tried to be creative in presenting the project that they had created collaboratively with their group members. Although some participants hadn’t seen great growth in their higher
order thinking skills, they all acknowledged that they got chance to cultivate their higher order thinking skills in this college English class.

Benefits

All the student participants claimed that they had benefited a lot from learning English in the star teacher’s English class. Although they gained growth in different aspects and with varied degrees, they had similar perceptions of the benefits they could get from this college English class. Two specific themes frequently appeared in the six participants’ descriptions of their learning experiences in this college English class, that is, autonomy in learning and opportunities to speak English in class.

**Autonomy in learning.** All of the student participants said that their autonomy in learning was improved through completing the pre-class and after-class learning tasks, though in different degrees. Since the teacher assessed the students’ achievements in a multi-dimensional way, the students were aware that they could not rely on the final exam to get a high grade in this course. They were expected to finish all the assignments and tasks in order to get a satisfactory grade. Therefore, they felt obliged to do the assignments and tasks as expected by the teacher. Most of the student participants said that they gradually became more autonomous in learning. However, Gang, one of the student participants, also mentioned that he was not autonomous enough in reviewing what he had learned in class, which might hinder his progress in learning English.

**Opportunities to speak English.** “Original” was the word used by all the student participants to describe the teaching model in the star teacher’s English class.

The way of teaching and learning English in this college English differed from that in the more traditional English class in high school. All the six students gave pretty similar
descriptions of the way of English teaching and learning in their high schools. They said their high school teachers adopted the traditional way of teaching and dominated the class by lecturing, with focus on explaining grammar and vocabulary. The students simply listened and took notes. As a result, they could read, but they had limited proficiency in English listening, speaking and writing. Unlike the more traditional English classroom where the teacher dominated the class doing most of the talking, this college English class was full of vitality because of the various kinds of activities organized by the teacher. The various activities organized by the teacher, according to all the six student participants, offered them a lot of opportunities to speak English in class.

All the six student participants mentioned that the teacher in this college English class required them to speak English in class, and the teacher constantly engaged them in interactions with each other in English. Even when analyzing an article in class, the teacher raised questions and engaged students in discussions. While discussing questions in class, students were required to speak English. In this way, they were pushed to apply the vocabulary and grammatical points that they had learned to in-class discussion. They were not treated by the teacher as passive recipient of knowledge; instead, they were expected to get involved in active learning in class. In addition, students also got the chance to stand in front of the class and present their projects in English. Some students regarded it as a challenging task, while some students saw it as a great opportunity to practice their oral English.

Challenges

The six student participants stressed different challenges they had met in the English class. Some found it difficult to respond to the teacher’s questions quickly, because they had difficulty in expressing their ideas in English. Some said they had difficulty in understanding all
that the teacher was saying in class, because they were not used to the all-English learning environment. Some student participants regarded the presentation of their projects in class as “challenging”, because they were nervous when speaking in front of the class. Although the student participants perceived the challenges in learning in this college English class in somewhat different manner, they seemed to have the same difficulty in learning English. They all mentioned their limited proficiency in English listening and speaking skills. This might be attributed to the traditional way of teaching and learning English before they entered the college. Due to the necessity to prepare for the college entrance examination, the English teaching and learning in high school was exam-oriented, with little attention paid to improving students’ English listening and speaking skills. Therefore, when they learned English in an all-English environment in class, they had difficulty in adapting themselves to the new way of teaching and learning English. All the student participants mentioned that they had gone through a hard time when they first attended the star teacher’s English class in the first year of college.

The above descriptions showed that all the student participants regarded the way of teaching and learning English in the college English class as original to them. They gained benefits from the flipped learning and the student-centered active learning environment in class, and yet they were also faced with challenges. Their perceptions of the learning experiences in the star teacher’s partly flipped English class might lend insights into the effects of the flipped classroom model on students’ English language learning.

**Chapter Summary**

In this chapter, I presented the findings of my study. I gave a brief introduction to my participants, and described briefly the research site of my study. A special look was taken into the active learning classroom teaching model, for this model integrated the flipped classroom
model. Then I described the way of English teaching and learning in the star teacher’s English class. The star teacher appeared to adjust the teaching model of the active learning classroom, and partly flipped her English class. What came next was the case descriptions of each of my student participants. With individual differences, my student participants witnessed their growth in this college English class in different aspects. However, they had similar perceptions of their English learning experiences in this class in terms of language acquisition, cultivation of higher order thinking skills, benefits and challenges. Thus, common themes were generated and presented in this chapter as well.
CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to explore the effects of the flipped classroom model on students’ learning in a college English class in China. This study addressed the following overarching research question: What are the effects of the flipped classroom model on the learning of Chinese undergraduate students in a college English class? The following guiding research questions were explored:

1. In what ways is the teaching of English implemented in a flipped classroom?

2. In what ways do students perceive the ways of constructing knowledge and acquiring language when studying English in a flipped classroom?

3. In what ways do students perceive the opportunities for cultivation of higher order thinking skills in a flipped college English class?

4. In what ways do students perceive the benefits and limitations when studying English in a flipped classroom?

The previous chapter presented the findings I got from the multiple-case study of a star teacher’s college English class. I described the English teaching in this college English class and six students’ perceptions of their English learning experiences in this class. Although the six student participants differed in their perceptions of their learning experiences in this English class, there were similarities in how they perceived the way of English teaching and learning in this class. The discussion that follows centers around the findings of this study in the light of constructivism and the revised Bloom’s taxonomy, which lends insights into the effect of the flipped classroom model on students’ learning.

Conclusions

Based on the findings from the multiple-case study of a star teacher’s college English class, conclusions were drawn and research questions were answered.
Research question 1: In what ways is the teaching of English implemented in a flipped classroom?

The star teacher Yu, whose English class I studied, adopted the active learning classroom teaching model which integrates the flipped classroom model. This teaching model involves the pre-class flipped learning, in-class case analysis or task-based instruction, and after-class assignments for further in-depth thinking and studying. Through the analysis of data collected from interviews, classroom observation, and documentation, I got a general picture of how the teaching of English was carried out in the star teacher’s English class.

The teacher provided students with a variety of learning tasks and assignments before class, preparing students for the in-class learning. Most of the learning of vocabulary and grammar was moved out of the class time. Word map and worksheet were offered to students as guidance for vocabulary and grammar study. However, the vocabulary learning was not fully flipped, for the teacher also picked some key words to elaborate on in class. The teaching of a new word did not simply involve the translation of the word. Instead, the teacher led students to learn the use of the new word within context, i.e. offering several sample sentences to show the usage of the word. In addition, the derivatives, synonyms and/or antonyms of the word were mentioned. Sometimes students were asked to apply the word through translation practice. The teacher spent little time in teaching grammar, except some grammatical points that most students did not understand well as reflected in their pre-class test or in-class exercises.

The learning of the articles in the textbook was also partly flipped in this English class. The teacher seldom gave students teaching videos related to an article to be learned. She handed out a worksheet with questions related to the article to assist students in understanding the article before class. Students were expected to learn new words and grammatical points that appeared
in the article on their own before class. Students were also asked to learn about the background information about the article either through utilizing the learning resources offered by the teacher or through researching on their own. The in-depth text analysis of the article was carried out in class. Instead of lecturing all the time, the teacher guided students to get an in-depth understanding of the article by constantly engaging students in classroom discussion and thinking. The teacher did not focus on the words, and grammatical rules used in the article while leading students to analyze the article. Instead, she guided students to summarize the main idea of the article, analyze the structure and the development of the piece of writing, and probe into the author’s purpose of writing. She did ask students to translate some long and complex sentences in the article, but she did not lead students to translate the sentences word by word. Instead, she showed several translations from students’ pre-class translation work and led them to compare and think of the best version of translation. In addition, the in-class time was not merely devoted to text analysis of articles. Students were given opportunities to speak English in class with various activities such as role play and presentation of their individual or group work.

After class, students were assigned exercises related to vocabulary, grammar, and translation which would be discussed in class. Moreover, students were expected to carry out further discussion of some questions related to the learning contents in class, and to do projects in group. The projects were supposed to be completed by students themselves. The teacher might offer guidance to students if they needed. After the completion of the projects, students were expected to present their projects in class. English was the language they had to use in the presentation, and innovations were encouraged in the way they presented their projects.

Related to the literature I reviewed, the teaching of English in this star teacher’s English class possessed the characteristics of a flipped classroom. Although there is no single widely
agreed definition of the flipped classroom model, its basic idea of moving direct instructions out of the class for self-paced learning was partly manifested in the star teacher’s English class. Although I had chosen the definition of the flipped classroom model given by the Flipped Learning Network as the working definition, I found that the English teaching in this English class conformed more to the definition of the flipped classroom model by Abeysekera and Dawson (2015). They defined the flipped classroom model as:

- a set of pedagogical approaches that: (1) move most information-transmission teaching out of class; (2) use class time for learning activities that are active and social; and (3) require students to complete pre- and/or post-class activities to fully benefit from in-class work. (Abeysekera & Dawson, 2015, p. 3)

In the star teacher’s English class, the most information-transmission teaching of vocabulary and grammar was largely moved out of class, with only a few key words and the grammatical points that most students had trouble understanding to be taught in class. In class, the teacher paid much attention to engaging students in immediate interactions with both the teacher and their peers, even when she was guiding students to analyze and understand an article. Students were expected to complete pre-and post-class activities to further their in-depth thinking and study. Furthermore, the teacher did use the computer technology to assist the teaching and learning in this English class. For instance, she used the online learning center and Chaoxing App to share learning resources, assign tasks, make announcements, give tests, and create forums for discussion. However, she did not make videos to deliver the teaching of vocabulary, grammar and articles.

It seemed that the teaching in this star teacher’s English class was consistent in most part with the definition of the flipped classroom model given by Abeysekera and Dawson (2015). Abeysekera and Dawson (2015) claimed that their definition was the superset of other definitions of the flipped classroom model, because their definition eliminated claims about the positive
effects of the flipped classroom model, condemnation of existing teaching approaches, assumptions about the implementers’ motivations and specification of technologies to be used. After all, the implementation of the flipped classroom model does vary from teacher to teacher, and this is why there is no single widely agreed definition of the flipped classroom model up to this point.

As to the role of the teacher in class, all the six student participants held similar views that the teacher was a “guide” rather than a “dominator” in class, guiding and facilitating their learning. Some of the students maintained that the teacher was a “participant” and a “friend” who “explored knowledge together with them”. This finding of my study was consistent with the findings in former studies that in the flipped classroom, teachers are not mere disseminators of knowledge, but they serve as a coach, guide, collaborator and facilitator in students’ learning (Bergmann & Sams, 2012b; Plunkett, 2014).

In addition, the star teacher Yu said she would not take the flipped classroom model as the single or major teaching approach in her English class. She did not think that all the problems arising in education could possibly be solved by the flipped classroom model. She argued that no matter what teaching method was employed, teachers should pay attention to the characteristics of the learning contents and the needs of students. Therefore, she did not fully flip her English class. Her views on the use of teaching methods were in line with the findings in former studies. There was an awareness among researchers and teachers that “a teaching method, however effective it is claimed to be, could not be blindly borrowed” (Cheng & Xie, 2017, p. 327). This star teacher also had such awareness, and she adjusted the active learning classroom teaching model to better serve the English teaching and learning in her class.
Research question 2: In what ways do students perceive the ways of constructing knowledge and acquiring language when studying English in a flipped classroom?

By comparing and contrasting the six student participants’ perceptions of their learning experiences in this partly flipped English class, I found that despite individual differences, these students had similar perceptions of the ways they learned English in this class. All the six student participants shared similar views on the flipped learning before class, the student-centered active learning in class, and the group work done after class.

The learning of vocabulary and grammar was mostly moved out of class. Students were expected to learn new words and grammar by themselves under the guidance from the teacher. They learned vocabulary by following the guidance in the template of a word map designed by the teacher. The six student participants all compared the way of learning vocabulary in this college English class with that in the more traditional English class in high school. Instead of learning lists of isolated words by memorizing the spellings and the Chinese meanings of the words, they learned new words in a more comprehensive way. In addition to paying attention to the pronunciation, spellings, and meanings of the new words, they learned to use the words, and they enlarged their vocabulary by learning the derivatives, synonyms and antonyms of the words. They regarded this way of learning vocabulary as “helpful”, and they could “get a deeper understanding of the new words”. Moreover, they learned a new way to learn vocabulary. As to grammar learning, the students were expected to learn grammar with the aid of the worksheet offered by the teacher. The worksheet included an elaborate explanation of certain grammatical points and related exercises to assist students’ learning. The six students also regarded the flipped learning of grammar as “helpful”, for they could learn at their own pace, and get a better command of the grammatical points learned. Based on the above descriptions, I found that most
of the student participants held positive attitudes towards the flipped learning of vocabulary and grammar, though some of the students regarded the learning of vocabulary based on the word map as “tiring”, and some had difficulty in learning grammar on their own.

With the most information-transmission instruction of vocabulary and grammar moved out of class, the teacher did not treat the texts in the textbook as exercises in grammatical analysis. Instead, she paid much attention to the analysis of the content of texts. The initial reading and understanding of the text were also moved out of class. Students were expected to learn the new words and background information of the article before class, and they had to read the article and ponder over some related questions to check their comprehension of the text. The six student participants said this assignment prepared them for the in-class learning. They said they got a better understanding of the text when they came to class prepared and learned through interactions with their teacher and peers.

In class, the teacher guided students to make an in-depth text analysis with the focus on deeper understanding of the content of the text. Instead of dominating the talking in class, the teacher often engaged students in discussion and encouraged students to think and speak English. All the six student participants acknowledged that they were given a lot of opportunities to speak English in class. Based on their descriptions, I found that this college English class was characterized by a student-centered active learning environment in class. Most of the student participants said they became more active thanks to the active learning environment in class. Moreover, these students witnessed their growth in this English class. All of them felt that they had improved their English listening and speaking proficiency. Most of the students acknowledged the improvement in their autonomy in language learning.
After class, students were engaged in further discussions of the questions related to the in-class learning. In addition, they were also expected to complete projects in group. All the six students said that they benefited from this collaborative work, for they learned to think critically through interactions with their peers and improved their English speaking skills.

Relative to literature on the flipped classroom model, the findings of this study added evidence to the positive effects of the flipped classroom model. Previous research found that the flipped classroom approach offers great benefits for both the teachers and students in foreign language classrooms, because classroom time can be applied to more interactive tasks and students can learn at their own pace (Basal, 2015; Evseeva & Solozhenko, 2015). My study focused on students’ perceptions of their learning experiences in a flipped college English class. Therefore, the findings of my study did not reveal the benefits for the teacher. However, the findings of my study did show that the students got benefits from the flipped learning in this English class. The flipped learning of vocabulary and grammar enabled the students to learn at their own pace, and they could seek individual support and guidance from the teacher.

In addition, coming to the class prepared through the partly flipped learning of articles, the students were constantly engaged in interactions with both the teacher and their peers in class. In this way they learned new knowledge and integrated the new knowledge with what they had learned before class. The group work after class enabled students to apply what they had learned to completing a task and solving problems by themselves. Working collaboratively with peers, they learned from each other. Moreover, they had to use English to present their group work in class. The six student participants all acknowledged that the teacher created an “active learning environment” in class. Based on the constructivist learning theory, students should be active agents in their learning rather than passive knowledge-recipients. Instead of
passively receiving knowledge delivered by teachers, students actively explore, experiment, question and reflect on real-world problems, which leads to deep understanding; and moreover, students learn how to learn by engaging in these activities (Grant, 2013). In light of constructivism, the students in this English class could be regarded as active agents in their learning who constructed knowledge actively with cooperation and support from peers and the teacher. The findings of this study also echoed the former studies on the flipped classroom model which claimed that the flipped classroom model is pedagogically sound and fosters active learning (Abeysekera & Dawson, 2015; Basal, 2015; Zainuddin & Halili, 2016).

However, this study also found that not all students preferred the flipped classroom model to the more traditional teaching approach. One student participant in this study articulated that the traditional way of teaching and learning English should be valued, and that he hoped the teacher could stick to the traditional way of lecturing most of the time. He also recognized the value of the new teaching model in this English class, for he had seen growth in his English listening and speaking skills. However, he was more accustomed to the traditional way of teaching and learning English, and he thought of the traditional teaching approach as more effective in preparing him for exams. This finding lent support to the findings by Missildine, Fountain, Summers, and Gosselin (2013) that students were more satisfied with traditional lecture and failed to appreciate the value of interactive learning in the flipped classroom.

Research question 3: In what ways do students perceive the opportunities for cultivation of higher order thinking skills in a flipped college English class?

This section presented students’ perceptions of the cultivation of higher order thinking skills in this partly flipped English class in the light of the revised Bloom’s taxonomy.
All the six student participants claimed that they got a lot of opportunities for cultivating higher order thinking skills. With the teaching of vocabulary and grammar mostly moved out of the class, the teacher engaged students in a variety of activities in class, including questioning, discussion, role play, presentation, etc. The students said they were given much chance to use English in writing or speaking both in and out of class. Even when the teacher was leading them to make in-depth text analysis of an article, the teacher constantly engaged them in discussion and thinking. All the student participants mentioned that through in-class discussions with the teacher and peers, they learned to think critically. The teacher never gave them one single standard answer, but she encouraged them to think independently and critically. In addition, the students said they cultivated higher order thinking skills in the process of completing the project. The project was a task done collaboratively with peers and guided by the teacher who offered suggestions for each group after class. Moreover, they tried to be creative in presenting in class the project that they had created collaboratively with their group members.

In the light of the revised Bloom’s taxonomy, this partly flipped college English class did offer some opportunities for students to cultivate their higher order thinking skills in class. The learning of vocabulary and grammar which involved lower level of cognitive work, i.e. remembering and understanding, was largely moved out of class. The learning of articles was partly flipped, for the students read and understood the articles before class which prepared them for in-class learning. The in-depth analysis of the articles in class still involved the cognitive work of understanding. However, the teacher guided students to think independently and critically and constantly engaged students in activities like discussion, brainstorming, storytelling, role play and presentation of projects in class. This finding indicated that in this partly flipped English class, students were engaged in activities that entailed the use of higher level of
cognitive work, i.e. applying, analyzing, evaluating and creating. Moreover, there were also after-class assignments and tasks, such as discussion and projects, which required of students the use of their higher levels of cognitive work.

The above findings of the study were also in line with the findings of previous studies. It is said that the flipped classroom inverts Bloom’s revised taxonomy of educational objectives by moving the lower levels of cognitive work out of the class and focusing on the higher levels of cognitive work in class (Hung, 2014; Kvashnina & Martynko, 2016). The original direct in-class instruction that requires lower level of cognitive work (i.e. remembering and understanding) is moved out of class; the in-class time is then freed and devoted to higher level of cognitive work (i.e. applying, analyzing, evaluating and creating) with support of peers and guidance from the instructor (Bergmann & Sams, 2012b; Hung, 2015; Kvashnina & Martynko, 2016; Zainuddin & Halili, 2016).

Although some participants hadn’t seen great growth in their higher order thinking skills, they all acknowledged that they got opportunities to cultivate their higher order thinking skills in this college English class. This finding was in line with the findings of former studies that students in the flipped classroom have more opportunities to develop higher order thinking with support from both teacher and peers (Hung, 2015). In addition, this finding seemed to offer insights to fill the gap in literature found by O’Flaherty and Phillips (2015) who suggested that further study should be done to provide “stronger evidence in evaluating student learning outcomes that particularly improved student learning and development, as critical thinkers, problems solvers and team players” (p. 94).

Research question 4: In what ways do students perceive the benefits and limitations when studying English in a flipped classroom?
Due to individual differences such as personalities and English proficiency levels, the six student participants differed in their perceptions of the benefits and challenges when studying English in this partly flipped English class. However, they had shared benefits and similar challenges.

The six student participants shared some benefits from this college English class. First, they all reported improvement in their autonomy in learning. They said that the teacher would assess and grade their performance in completing the pre-class and after-class learning tasks, they were motivated to do the tasks as expected by the teacher. Most of the student participants said that they gradually became more motivated and autonomous in learning. However, Gang, one of the student participants, also mentioned that he was not autonomous enough in reviewing what he had learned in class, which might hinder his progress in learning English. Second, all the six students benefited from the active learning environment in class, enjoying plenty of opportunities to speak English in class, for they said they improved their oral English, though in different degrees. Another benefit was that they got chance to cultivate their higher order thinking skills. All the student participants stated that they saw improvement in their critical thinking skills and problem-solving skills.

The above findings showed that the flipped classroom model fostered active learning and brought about improvement in students learning experiences. This also fell in line with the findings of former studies. A literature review study conducted based on 20 articles on flipped classroom from 2013-2015, revealed that the flipped classroom model contributed to students’ academic achievement, enhanced students’ motivation and engagement in learning (Zainuddin & Halili, 2016). The six student participants in this study were motivated to learn and they were engaged in active learning in this English class.
Challenges in this partly flipped English class varied from student to student due to their individual differences. However, one challenge shared by the six student participants was their relatively low English proficiency in listening and speaking. This, according to them, was due to the lack of attention paid to English listening and speaking in the more traditional English classroom. There has already been awareness among researchers and educators of the problems with the teacher-centered English teaching. One critical problem is that after having learning English for many years, students cannot speak English fluently (Dai, 2001)

*Overarching research question: What are the effects of the flipped classroom model on the learning of Chinese undergraduate students in a college English class?*

Based on the findings drawn to answer the four guiding research questions, I made the following conclusions:

First, most of the student participants held positive attitudes towards the flipped learning tasks with guidance from the teacher, including the largely flipped learning of vocabulary and grammar and partly flipped learning of articles. Vocabulary learning in this class was no longer the memorization of lists of isolated words. Instead, students were guided to learn new words within context. The learning of grammar was no longer an important focus in class. Students perceived the practice of moving vocabulary and grammar learning out of class as “helpful”, for they could learn at their own pace, and get guidance from the teacher who provided assistance in learning grammar. The initial reading and understanding of articles, according to the student participants, prepared students for the in-class learning where they integrated the new knowledge with the prior knowledge they had learned before class through constant interactions with both the teacher and peers.
Second, the student participants acknowledged that they benefited from the active learning environment in class, for they got a lot of opportunities to interact with others and speak English. All of the student participants claimed to have made improvement in their English listening and speaking skills.

Third, the student participants acknowledged that there were opportunities for them to cultivate higher order thinking skills in this English class. With most the learning of vocabulary and grammar moved out of class, the in-class text analysis was no longer taken as exercises for grammar analysis. Instead, students were engaged in in-depth understanding of the text content through active participation in discussion and thinking. The in-class time was devoted to more interactive activities rather than one-way lecturing with the teacher dominating the talking in class.

Fourth, post-class assignments continued to engage students in learning and thinking. Students were also given chance to complete a project in collaboration with their peers. This task entailed the use of the higher level of cognitive work, including applying, analyzing, evaluating and creating. Moreover, the post-class projects were then brought back to the class, and students got chance to share their work in English.

Fifth, the student participants saw their growth in autonomous learning. However, some student was faced with challenges in learning because of his lack of autonomy in learning. This leads to a curious questioning about the role of students’ autonomy in learning in their English studies in the flipped classroom.

To sum up, most of the student participants regarded the teaching model adopted in this college English class as “original” and “helpful”. In particular, the students claimed that they benefited from the flipped learning approach, the active learning environment in class and the
collaborative group work after class. The findings of this study lent evidence to the positive effects of the flipped classroom. However, the students were also faced with challenges in their study. Most of the student participants found the English learning in class challenging because they were not proficient in English listening and speaking. Some found it challenging to learn grammar on their own. One student was frustrated in group work when some of her group members were not cooperative and did not do the work. Among the six student participants, only one student articulated that the traditional way of teaching and learning English should be valued, for it was more effective in preparing him for exams. The findings of this study might not be robust evidence for the effects of the flipped classroom model, but they added to the understanding of how students perceived their learning experiences in a flipped English class.

**Implications**

In this study, I explored students’ perceptions of their learning experiences in a flipped college English class, with the aim of getting an insight into the effects of the flipped classroom model on students’ English learning. Based on the findings of this study, I generated some implications for English teaching and learning.

First, the active learning classroom model, which integrated the flipped classroom model, redefined the roles of the teacher and the students, which gave an insight into the possible ways to improve students’ learning experiences. This teaching model aimed to transform the teacher-centered classroom into a student-centered one, with the purpose of engaging students in active learning with the guidance from the teacher. The findings of my study revealed that most of the students perceived their growth through learning in the active learning environment. Therefore, this study suggested that teachers should create an active learning environment in the English class to engage students in active learning.
Second, to facilitate students’ learning, teachers may assign pre-class flipped learning tasks to prepare students for the in-class active learning, and then guides students to apply what they have learned with post-class activities or assignments. The college English class I studied employed this practice. The student participants appeared to be involved in active learning, and instead of being a passive recipient of knowledge, these student participants were engaged in interactive activities and constructed knowledge through interactions with both the teacher and peers. The idea of facilitating students’ learning with pre-class flipped learning assignments, in-class active learning and post-class further learning tasks proved effective in this college English class, since most of the six student participants held positive views on these tasks. The definition of the flipped classroom model given by Abeysekera and Dawson (2015) also clearly stated similar idea that the flipped teaching approaches “require students to complete pre and/or post-class activities to fully benefit from in-class work” (p. 3).

Third, teachers should not borrow any teaching approach blindly. Teachers should select and synthesize various methods to create their own teaching methods which were most appropriate for their own teaching context and for the particular students they taught (Wang & Zhang, 2017). The star teacher in this college English class did not fully flip her class. She thought that the flipped classroom model could not solve all the problems arising in education. She was aware that she could not blindly adopt one single teaching model in her class, so she adjusted her teaching approach according to the characteristics of the course and the needs of her students.

Fourth, school administrators or policymakers may promote student-centered active learning by offering teachers useful trainings with regards to the application of the flipped classroom model. In addition, they should raise teachers’ awareness that the employment of the
flipped classroom model should address the actual needs of students and the characteristics of the subjects being taught.

**Recommendations for Further Research**

Since there are limitations in this study, further research needs to be carried out in order to offer stronger evidence for the efficacy of the flipped classroom model.

Firstly, the star teacher did not fully flip her English class, for the in-depth text analysis of an article was carried out in class through lecturing, though constant interactions occurred during the text analysis. Therefore, the findings of this study might not be regarded as robust evidence for the effects of the flipped classroom model. Further study may target a fully flipped English class to study the effects of the flipped classroom model. The star teacher considered it unrealistic to fully flip her intensive English reading class, for she thought that immediate interaction was needed when analyzing a text. Therefore, further study may target an English class where the learning relies more on practicing, such as English writing course and English translating course. Case studies may be conducted to explore the following research questions: (1) In what ways do students perceive their learning experiences in a fully flipped English writing course? or (2) In what ways do students perceive their learning experiences in a fully flipped English translating course?

Secondly, this study only collected qualitative data to explore students’ perceptions of the effects of the flipped classroom model, so the findings of this study can only add new understandings to the phenomenon being studied. Further study can consider collecting the quantitative data to study the effects of the flipped classroom model. An experimental study may be conducted with the use of the flipped classroom model as an intervention, and a traditional English class as the control group. This research design may be adopted to compare a flipped
English classroom with a traditional English classroom to find out whether the flipped classroom model improves students’ academic achievement. The research question to be studied may be worded as: Does students’ academic achievement improve by utilizing a flipped classroom model? In addition, this experimental research design may also address the following research questions: (1) Does students’ motivation to learn improve by utilizing a flipped classroom model? and (2) Does students’ autonomy in learning improve by utilizing a flipped classroom model?

Thirdly, due to individual differences, in particular the English proficiency level, the student participants in this study perceived their learning experiences in somewhat different ways. Further study may be conducted to explore how the English proficiency level affects the students’ perceptions of their learning experiences in a flipped English class. A multiple case study may be conducted to explore the perceptions of students with different English proficiency levels on their learning experiences in a flipped English class. The research question to be addressed may be: In what ways do students with different English proficiency levels perceive their learning experiences in a flipped English class?

Fourthly, the students targeted for this study were English majors, so they were motivated to improve their English proficiency. Yet one of the student participants articulated his preference for the traditional way of teaching and learning English, because he wanted to pass certain critical examinations such as Tests for English Majors which were nationwide standard tests for undergraduate English majors and the examinations that were required for him to enter a graduate program. Further research may target non-English majors in China to explore students’ perceptions of the learning experiences in a flipped college English class. Almost all the non-English majors in China are required to take the college English class in the first two years of
college life. Some colleges and universities even make it a must to pass the College English Tests before the students can get their bachelor’s degrees. In this case, many students study English in order to pass the tests. A multiple case study may be conducted to explore non-English major students’ perceptions of the learning experiences in a flipped college English class. The research question may be worded as “In what ways do non-English major students perceive the learning experiences in a flipped English class?”

Fifthly, in this multiple case study, only six students were selected as the participants. Further research may target more student participants with a phenomenological research design. With more participants included, the phenomenological research may add further in-depth understanding to the effects of the flipped classroom model on students’ learning. The research question to be studied may be: In what ways do students perceive their learning experiences in a flipped college English class?

Sixthly, the findings of this study showed that the teaching in the star teacher’s class conformed more to the definition of the flipped classroom model by Abeysekera and Dawson (2015) than to the working definition by the Flipped Learning Network. There is no single widely accepted definition of the flipped classroom model, for the teaching approach varies from teacher to teacher. Further research may be conducted to explore how teachers implement the flipped classroom model in a college English class, addressing the research question of “In what ways do teachers implement the flipped classroom model in a college English class?” The following guiding research questions may be addressed: (1) In what ways do teachers make choices about activities for the pre-class learning? (2) In what ways do teachers make choices about activities for the in-class learning? and (3) In what ways do teachers make choices about activities for the after-class learning?
Last but not least, this study mainly focused on students’ perceptions of their learning experiences in a flipped English class, with little attention paid to the teacher’s perceptions of her teaching experiences in a flipped English class. Further research may be conducted to explore teachers’ perceptions of the use of the flipped classroom model in teaching. A multiple case study may be carried out to explore teachers’ perceptions of their teaching experiences in a flipped college English class. The following research question may be addressed: In what ways do teachers perceive their learning experiences in a flipped college English class? In addition, a survey may be conducted to collect quantitative data from a large sample, such as teachers teaching non-English majors in China, to study teachers’ perceptions of the feasibility of using the flipped classroom model in a college English class. The following research question may be addressed: Do teachers perceive it feasible to use the flipped classroom model in a college English class?

Chapter Summary

The flipped classroom model is regarded as an innovative teaching approach that fosters active learning. I conducted this multiple case study to explore the effects of the flipped classroom model on students’ learning in a flipped college English class in China. The research site I targeted launched an educational reform with the Active Learning Classroom program to transform teacher-centered classroom to student-centered one. A sample teaching model which integrated the flipped classroom model was created to offer guidance to teachers. I conducted my study in one star teacher’s English class, and with the star teacher and six of her students as my participants, I collected data from multiple sources such as interviews, classroom observation and documentation. Based on the data I collected, I explored students’ perceptions of their learning experiences in this flipped English class.
This chapter discussed the findings of my study and answered the research questions. The findings of my study showed that students perceived improved learning in the active learning environment in this partly flipped English class. They perceived enhanced autonomy in learning, improvement in English listening and speaking proficiency, and opportunities for cultivating higher order thinking skills in this college English class. However, they were also faced with challenges in this class, which they attributed to their low proficiency level in English listening and speaking.

Based on the findings of my study, I described the implications for the use of the flipped classroom in English teaching and learning. Teachers may try to create an active learning environment to improve students’ learning experiences. School administrators or policymakers may provide teachers with useful trainings in order to promote student-centered teaching approach. In addition, recommendations for further study were provided in this chapter.
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This interview protocol is used when interviewing the student participants.

**Time of interview:**

**Date:**

**Place:**

**Interviewer:**

**Interviewee (Pseudonym):**

**Interview Introduction**

We are starting at [start time] so we can expect to be finished by [end time]. I will turn on the recorder now, and then review the study information before we begin the interview.

The primary research question for this case study is: What are the effects of the flipped classroom model on Chinese undergraduate students’ learning in a college English class? The purpose of this in-depth interview is to hear directly from you about thoughts and ideas from learning in the flipped college English classroom. Accordingly, questions will be posed concerning your personal experiences, as well as your impressions and opinions.

As is covered in the informed consent form provided to you, this interview will be recorded and transcribed, and you will have the opportunity to review the transcript of your interview and a written report on your portion of the study. You will also receive an executive summary of the study once it has been completed. All identifying information will be removed from the study before presentation or publication. Your identity and all study documentation will be kept in strict confidence.

Your participation in this research is completely voluntary. You may choose to not answer any questions in the interview process, and you may decide to withdraw from the study at any time.

Do you have any questions or concerns before we begin?

**Guiding Research Question 1:** In what ways do students perceive the ways of constructing knowledge and acquiring language when studying English in a flipped classroom?

1. Please describe your experiences learning English in the flipped class.

**Prompts:**

1) Please describe how you prepared for each class. (Please describe a specific example.)
2) Please describe the way you learned grammar and vocabulary in this class. (Please describe a specific example.)
3) Please describe what activities you usually had in the class. (Please describe a specific example.)
4) Please tell me how often you spoke English in class.
5) Please describe your role in learning in this class. (Please describe a specific example.)
6) Please describe the teacher’s role in class. (Please describe a specific example.)
7) Please describe what you did after class? (Please describe a specific example.)
8) In what ways do you feel this class is different from the English classes you had in the past. (Please describe a specific example.)
9) Please tell me about your feelings about such differences.
10) Please tell me more about your perception of your learning experiences in this class.
Guiding Research Question 2: In what ways do students perceive the opportunities for cultivation of higher order thinking skills in a flipped college English class?

2. Please describe your perceptions of how higher order thinking skills are cultivated in this class.

**Explanation:** Higher order thinking is a concept based on various taxonomies of learning, particularly the one created by Benjamin Bloom. Bloom’s revised taxonomy includes six levels of cognitive thinking, i.e. “remember, understand, apply, analyse, evaluate and create” (Kauffman, 2015, p.5). Higher order thinking skills are reflected by the top four levels in Bloom’s Taxonomy: apply, analyse, evaluate and create. Higher order thinking involves the learning of skills such as critical thinking and problem solving.

Prompts:
1) Please describe the opportunities you had in using higher order thinking skills in class.
Further prompts: Please describe the opportunities to discuss questions about any subject matter in English. (Please describe a specific example.)
Please describe any activities that helped cultivate your critical thinking. (Please describe a specific example.)
Please describe any activities that helped cultivate your problem solving abilities. (Please describe a specific example.)
2) Please tell me your opinions about moving the learning and memorization of English grammar and vocabulary out of class time.

Guiding Research Question 3: In what ways do students perceive the benefits and limitations when studying English in a flipped classroom?

3. Please describe your perceptions of the benefits and limitations of a flipped English class.

Prompts:
1) Please describe the benefits you gained in learning English in this class. (Please describe a specific example.)
2) Please describe the challenges you were faced with in this class. (Please describe a specific example.)
3) What changes do you think should be made to improve your learning in the class?
4) What suggestions would you give to the teacher in order to better meet your need in learning?

Now we come to the end of the interview. What additional information would you like to share with me? Thank you very much for attending this interview. I will write a detailed description of what we discussed today and check with you via Tencent QQ around the 12th week of this semester about the accuracy of the data as well as any updates that you may have.

Prompts for member-checking:
Please read the case description I wrote with information offered by you in the interview, and check the accuracy of the description.

Further prompts:
1) Upon reflecting on what you’ve learned this term, what key features of this class have been the most valuable for you in learning English?
2) Which features of the class had limited value for you in learning English?
3) What new questions do you have concerning your English learning in this class?
访提纲一

本访谈提纲用于采访参加访谈的学生。

访谈时间：
日期：
地点：
采访者：
被采访者（假名）：

访谈导入

我们在[开始时间]开始，预期于[结束时间]完成访谈。我现在将打开录音笔，在访谈
开始前回顾一下有关本研究的信息。

本案例研究的主要研究问题为：翻转课堂模式对中国本科生在大学英语课堂中的学习
有什么影响？本次深入访谈的目的在于直接听你谈论在翻转式大学英语课堂中学习的想法
和观点。因此，所问问题将和你的个人经历、印象和观点相关。

正如在提供给您的知情同意书中所提到的，本次访谈将被录音和抄录下来，您也将有
机会检查你的访谈的文字稿以及本研究有关你的部分的书面报告。一旦本研究完成，您也将
收到一份本研究的结论摘要。在展示或发表本研究前，任何身份识别信息将被移除。您
的身份以及所有的研究文档都将受到严格保密。

您参与这项研究完全是自愿的。在访谈过程中，您可以选择不回答任何一个问题，您
也可以在任何时候决定退出本研究。

在我们开始前，您还有任何问题或疑虑吗？

指导性研究问题 1：学生是如何看待翻转式英语课堂中知识构建和语言习得的方式的？
1. 请描述一下您在翻转式课堂中学习英语的经历。
提示：
1）请描述一下您如何进行课前准备的。（请描述一个具体例子。）
2）请描述一下你在这个课堂学习语法和词汇的方式。（请描述一个具体例子。）
3）请描述一下你在这个课堂通常有哪些活动。（请描述一个具体例子。）
4）请告诉我你在课堂上说英语的机会有多频繁。
5）请描述一下你在这个课堂学习时的角色是什么。（请描述一个具体例子。）
6）请描述一下这个课堂老师的角色是什么。（请描述一个具体例子。）
7）请描述一下你课后的活动。（请描述一个具体例子。）
8）请问您觉得这个英语课堂和你过去上过的课有什么不同？请描述一个具体例子。
9）请告知您对这种不同的感受是什么？
10）请多告知一些您是如何看待在这个课堂的学习经历的。

指导性研究问题 2：学生是如何看待在翻转式大学英语课堂中培养高阶思维技能的机会
的？
2. 请描述一下您是如何看待在这个课堂培养高阶思维技能的方式的。
解释：高阶思维是基于各种各样的学习目标分类法的一个概念，尤其是本杰明•布鲁姆创造的分类法。修订版的布鲁姆分类法包含六个认知思维水平，即“记忆、理解、应用、分析、评估和创造”（Kauffman, 2015, p.5）。高阶思维技能体现在布鲁姆分类法的顶端的四个水平上：应用、分析、评估和创造。高阶思维涉及学习诸如批判性思维和解决问题的能力。

提示：
1）请描述一下你在这个课堂使用高阶思维技能的机会。
进一步提示：请描述一下用英文讨论有关某一话题的问题的机会。（请描述一个具体例子。）
请描述一下任何能帮助你培养批评性思维的活动。（请描述一个具体例子。）
请描述一下任何能帮助培养你解决问题的能力的活动。（请描述一个具体例子。）
2）请告知你对将英语语法和词汇的学习和记忆移到课堂时间之外的做法的看法。

指导性研究问题 3：学生是如何看待在翻转课堂中学习英文的好处和局限性的？
3）请描述一下您是如何看待翻转式英语课堂的好处和局限性的。

提示：
1）请描述一下你在这个课堂学习英文所得到的好处。（请描述一个具体例子。）
2）请描述一下你在这个课堂所面临的挑战。（请描述一个具体例子。）
3）你认为应该作出什么改变来改善你在这个课堂的学习？
4）为了更好地满足你在学习方面的需求，你会给老师什么样的建议？

现在访谈要结束了。你还有其他额外的信息要和我分享吗？非常感谢您参加此次访谈。我将详细描述我们今天所讨论的问题，并在这学期第 12 周和您通过 QQ 核查一下我从你那里所收集的数据的准确性，并看看您是否有要更新的内容。

成员检查时的提示：
请阅读我根据访谈时您提供的信息所写的案例描述，并检查描述的准确性。
进一步提示：
1）回顾你在本学期所学的到的东西，这个课堂在学习英语方面对于你来说最有价值的主要特点是什么？
2）这个课堂什么样的特点对你的英语学习的价值比较有限？
3）对于在这个课堂学习英语方面，你有哪些新的问题？
APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW PROTOCOL TWO

This interview protocol is used when interviewing the instructor.

**Time of interview:**
**Date:**
**Place:**
**Interviewer:**
**Interviewee (Pseudonym):**

**Interview Introduction**

We are starting at [start time] so we can expect to be finished by [end time]. I will turn on the recorder now, and then review the study information before we begin the interview.

The primary research question for this case study is: What are the effects of the flipped classroom model on Chinese undergraduate students’ learning in a college English class? The purpose of this interview is to hear directly from you about your way of teaching English in this class and your perceptions of students’ learning in class. The interview with you will help me better understand students’ learning experiences in a flipped English class.

This interview will be recorded and transcribed, and you will have the opportunity to review the transcript of your interview and a written report on your portion of the study. You will also receive an executive summary of the study once it has been completed. All identifying information will be removed from the study before presentation or publication. Your identity and all study documentation will be kept in strict confidence.

Your participation in this research is completely voluntary. You may choose to not answer any questions in the interview process, and you may decide to withdraw from the study at any time.

Do you have any questions or concerns before we begin?

**Interview prompts:**

1. Please describe the way you plan your teaching.
2. Please tell me more about the tasks you usually assigned to students before class and the purpose of these tasks. (Please describe a specific example.)
3. Please describe the activities you designed for students in class and the purpose of these activities. (Please describe a specific example.)
4. Please tell me more about the tasks you usually assigned to students after class and the purpose of the tasks. (Please describe a specific example.)
5. Please describe your perceptions of students’ learning in your class.
6. Please describe the benefits of implementing the flipped classroom model in class.
7. Please describe the challenges you are faced with in implementing the flipped classroom model in class.
8. What new information would you like to share with me?

Thank you very much for attending this interview. I will write a detailed description of what we discussed today and check with you about the accuracy of the data as well as any updates that you may have.
APPENDIX D: INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Title of study:
The Effects of the Flipped Classroom Model on Students’ Learning in a College English Class in China

Principal investigator: Xiaoying Wei
Institute: Gladys Benerd School of Education, University of Pacific

Your consent is being sought to participate in a research study, and your participation is entirely voluntary. The following information is provided for you to decide whether you wish to participate in the present study.

Purpose of the Study
The purpose of this research is to explore the effects of the flipped classroom model on students’ learning in a college English class in China. Through studying students’ perceptions of their learning experiences in a flipped English class, this study attempts to explore the efficacy of the flipped classroom model.

Procedures
Data collection of this study will mainly involve interviews (one interview with the instructor and one interview with each of the students), classroom observation, and documentation (e.g. journal entries, course projects, worksheets and teaching plans). Individuals involved in the data collection will be six students and the instructor as the participants. One individual interview will be conducted in the fourth week during the fall semester 2019 with each of the students as well as the instructor. The interview with each of the students will last about thirty minutes, and the interview with the instructor will last about fifteen minutes. Around the fifth week, the investigator will member-check with the participants about the accuracy of the data collected from the interview and ask for any updated information they may have. Classroom observation will be made around the third week to see students’ learning activities in the classroom. Documents like the instructor’s teaching plans, some of students’ course projects and/or worksheets (both online or written) will be collected. During the six weeks of study, students will be asked to write five journal entries about their experiences in doing projects or assignments in the flipped college English class.

Possible Risks or Benefits
There is no direct benefit to you. However, the results of the study may help us to better understand the efficacy of the flipped classroom model. There is no big risk involved in this study. One possible risk is that you may feel nervous in the interview. Another possible risk is that you may feel uncomfortable providing feedbacks on your classroom experience or the instructor’s approach and instructional style. In this study you will be given chance to ask any questions concerning the interview and talk about your concerns before the interview is started. You always have the option to refrain from answering any questions that you feel uncomfortable or hesitant to answer. Another possible risk is the loss of confidentiality caused by the possibility that my laptop or cell phone or Tencent QQ could be
breached. This risk will be avoided by adopting the following measures: pseudonyms will be
used during data collection from the subjects; my cell phone and computer will be password
protected; password and device lock will be adopted to double ensure the security of my Tencent
QQ; communication records and documents on Tencent QQ as well as audio recorded files in the
cell phone will be deleted immediately after data collection.

Right of Refusal to Participate and Withdrawal
You are free to choose to participate in the study. You may refuse to participate or withdraw any
time from the study.

Confidentiality
All information you supply during the research will be held in confidence and unless you
specifically indicate your consent, your name will not appear in any report or publication of the
research.

Measures to protect your confidentiality are: Pseudonyms will be used when collecting data from
you. All digital data will be stored in the investigator’s password protected personal computer,
and all paper documents will be kept in a safe and locked location with accessibility kept to the
investigator only. The interviews will be recorded with the investigator’s password protected
cell phone and be transcribed within a couple days after the interviews. The recordings will be
deleted immediately after they are transcribed. The investigator will ensure the security of her
Tencent QQ by setting passwords, activating the device lock and deleting any communication
records or documents in time.

Upon conclusion of the research study, the data obtained will be maintained in a safe, locked or
otherwise secured location and will be destroyed after a period of three years after the research is
completed.

Available Sources of Information
If you have any further questions you may contact Principal Investigator (Ms. Xiaoying Wei), at
the phone number 18916569135 or by e-mail 122147911@qq.com or via Tencent QQ
122147911. You may also contact my advisor Dr. Nelson via the email address
tnelson@pacific.edu.

If you have questions about your rights as a participant in this research project, please contact the
IRB Administrator, Office of Research and Sponsored Programs, University of the Pacific by
phone (209) 946- 3903 or email IRB@pacific.edu.

Compensation
If participants send documents to the investigator by mail or express, the investigator will pay for
the freight. Participants will be offered a $10 gift for their participation after the completion of
the research.

Participant’s Consent Declaration
I have read and understand the information provided above. I have been given afforded the
opportunity to ask, and have been answered, any questions that I have. I understand that
participation is voluntary. Refusal to participate will involve no penalty. I understand that I may discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of accrued benefits (Benefits are accrued in proportion to the amount of study completed or as otherwise stated by the researcher) to which I am otherwise entitled. **I declare that I am at least 18 years of age.**

You will be offered a copy of this signed form to keep.

Signed: ______________________  Date:______________________________

Research Study Participant (Print Name): ________________________________

Principal Investigator’s Signature: ________________  Date:______________
知情同意书

研究课题：翻转课堂模式对中国大学英语课堂的学生的学习的影响
主要研究员：韦晓英
机构：太平洋大学格拉迪斯・贝纳德教育学院

在此征求您的同意来参加一项研究，您参与与否完全出于自愿。特提供下面的信息给您，以便您决定是否愿意参加本研究活动。

研究目的
这项研究的目的是探索翻转课堂模式对中国大学英语课堂的学生的学习的影响。通过研究学生对自己在翻转英语课堂中的学习经历的感想体会，本研究旨在探索翻转课堂模式的有效性。

研究步骤
本研究将通过访谈（与学生及老师的一对一访谈）、课堂观察和收集文件资料（例如学习日志、课程任务、活页练习题和教案）。数据收集将涉及的参与人员为六位学生和一位老师。在 2019 年秋季学期的第四周，将和老师及每一位学生进行一对一访谈。与每位学生的访谈将持续大约三十分钟，与老师的访谈将持续大约十五分钟。在第五周，研究员将进行成员检查，检查访谈中收集的数据是否准确，并询问是否有更新的信息可分享。在第三周，研究员将会来听课，观察学生们的课堂学习活动。本研究将收集教师的教案以及学生的一些作业（网上作业或手写作业）。在为期六个星期的研究中，学生将被要求写五篇学习日志，描述在翻转英语课堂里完成任务或作业的经历。

可能的风险或好处
本研究任何直接的好处。然而，本研究的结果可以帮助我们更好地理解翻转课堂模式的有效性。
本研究不涉及任何较大的风险。一个可能存在的风险是你在访谈中会感到紧张。另一个可能的风险是你会对你在课堂经历或教师的教学方法或教学风格感到不适。在本研究中，您将有机会在访谈前任何与访谈相关的问题，以及谈论您的担忧。您可以选择不回答任何令您感到不适或犹豫是否要回答的问题。另一个可能的风险是由于手机和电脑保管不善而失去保密性。为了避免此风险将采取以下措施：向受试者收集数据时将使用假名；我将用
密码保护我的手机和电脑；腾讯 QQ 的安全将得到密码和设备锁的双重保护；在收集数据后立刻删除 QQ 上的聊天记录和文件以及手机里的录音文件。

拒绝参与以及退出参与的权力
您可以自由选择是否参与本研究。您可以拒绝参与或在任何时候退出参与本研究。

保密原则
在研究期间您所提供的所有信息将被严格保密，除非您特别给予许可，您的名字将不会出现在任何有关本研究的报告或发表的文章中。

保护您提供的信息的机密性的措施有：从您那里收集数据时将使用假名。所有电子数据将被储存在研究员用密码保护的个人电脑里，所有文本资料将存放在只有研究员才能接触到的安全且上锁的地方。研究员将用设好密码的手机来对访谈进行录音，并在访谈后的几天时间里进行抄录。抄录后录音将立刻被删除。研究员将通过设密码、激活设备锁以及及时删除聊天记录和文件的方式来保证腾讯 QQ 的安全性。

研究结束后，所获得数据将被存放在安全的、上锁的或以其他任何方式确保安全的地方，并于研究结束三年后销毁。

研究员联系方式
如果您有任何问题需要了解，您可以通过以下几种方式联系主要研究员（韦晓英女士）：手机号码 18916569135、电子邮箱 122147911@qq.com、或 QQ 122147911。您也可以联系我的导师 Dr. Nelson，邮箱地址为 tnelson@pacific.edu。

如果您有任何有关作为本研究项目的参与者所拥有的权利的问题，请联系太平洋大学研究与资助项目办公室审查委员会管理人员，电话号码为（209）946–3903，邮箱地址为 IRB@pacific.edu。

补偿和报酬
如果参与者通过邮寄或快递的方式给研究员寄送文件资料，研究员将承担邮费或快递费。研究结束后，参与者将获得价值 10 美元左右的礼品。

参与人员的同意宣言
我已阅读并理解上述信息。我被授予提问的机会，我所提的问题已得到解答。我理解参与研究是基于自愿基础上的。拒绝参与将不牵涉任何惩罚。我理解我可以在任何时候中断参
与且不受到任何惩罚或损失任何我应得的利益（利益将根据研究完成的比例给予，或以研究员陈述过的为准）。我声明我已满 18 岁。

您将被提供一份签署过的此知情同意书用于保存。

签名: __________________________________  日期: ____________________________

研究参与者姓名: ______________________________

主要研究员签名: ______________________________
APPENDIX F: TEMPLATE FOR JOURNAL ENTRY

In the following six weeks, you will be asked to write altogether five journal entries. As you write in your journal entry, please use the following template as a guide in your thinking or points you may consider writing about:

1. Situation: Please describe an assignment or project in your English class that you worked on individually or with your classmates. (The assignment or project can be the one that was done in class or out of class time.)

2. Task: Please describe how this assignment or project was challenging for you.

3. Action: Please tell about the ways you worked on this assignment or project.
4. Results: Please describe the skills you used to overcome the challenge you were faced with in learning English through doing this assignment or project.

If there’s any question regarding the clarification of this guide, please feel free to contact me at 18916569135 or via e-mail 122147911@qq.com. Thank you for your cooperation!