The flipped classroom and flipped pedagogy have been visible in much writing about teaching (Boyer, 2013; Eaton, 2017; Fisher, Ross, LaFerriere & Maritz, 2017; Hao, 2016; LaFee, 2013; O’Flaherty & Phillips, 2015). For language teachers, there is nothing new about getting students to do some reading or view a video before class, but flipped learning has more to offer than that. It is a way to save classroom time for interactive activities that students cannot do on their own, and to individualise teaching to better support students in need of more instruction while extending students capable of more advanced language work. This article looks at how and why language teachers might adopt flipped pedagogy to work towards the Achievement Objectives of Learning Languages in the New Zealand Curriculum while embracing the principles of language teaching outlined in Paul Nation’s four strands model (Nation, 2007).

The term flipped classroom was coined by two American high school science teachers some time ago (Bergmann & Sams, 2012, 2014). Flipping the classroom usually refers to presenting new material digitally (e.g. as mini-lectures, videos, hypertext or audio) for students to access before or after class and/or at the point of need, freeing classroom time for interaction between students and the teacher. But this way of teaching is only partly new. In its simplest sense, it involves asking students to view material before class, so that class time is not taken up with the kinds of things students can do on their own. This is not much different from asking students to look at a movie or read a text before class, so that limited class time can be spent discussing the material rather than viewing or reading. There are, however a few things that set flipped learning apart from that.

Firstly, flipped learning usually involves the students viewing material that has been specially prepared for the class, often by the teacher. This may take the form of a mini-lecture – a short video presentation of a topic by a teacher. This can actually be a fairly traditional chalk-and-talk lesson or demonstration of some kind. Khan Academy, (www.khanacademy.org) is full of examples of this kind of material, and indeed, many teachers will get their students to view this kind of material produced by others rather than creating it themselves.

Figure 1: Flipped pedagogy
Secondly, the term *flipped* refers to reversing the traditional course of things, where students learn something new in class and are sent home to practise, applying this new knowledge for homework. In the flipped classroom, the students access the new material at home alone before class, then come to class to work on applying and consolidating their new knowledge together with the support of their peers and teacher.

**WHY FLIP?**

Students and teachers have limited time together, and students are generally expected to do some work outside of class. The question then becomes how to best make use of the time teachers have together with the students. Typically it is helpful if teachers are available to help students when they have questions or when they might become stuck trying to interpret or apply new concepts. The thinking is that students have less need of support when they are receiving new information. In the flipped classroom, the material that students access on their own, before class, is non-transient. That means that, unlike a face-to-face class, the material is available to review as many times as desired. It can be rewound, paused, replayed, shared, discussed and repurposed at any time of day or night. Students can watch the material individually or together, with parents or anyone else (Bergmann & Sams, 2012; Cunningham, 2016). It is when the students need to work with this information that they need the support of the teacher and their peers.

Sociocultural theories of language learning (e.g. Johnson, 2006; Lantolf & Beckett, 2009; Swain, Kinnear & Steinman, 2011) based on the work of Vygotsky (1978, 1986) hold that learning happens in communication with others. In a learning and teaching languages context, this means that discussion of new material can be a good way to follow up on pre-class viewing, listening or reading. If students are given some discussion questions when they come together in class, they may be able to come some way in engaging with the material in groups before the teacher becomes active in the discussion. Listening in on the group discussion can reveal what is difficult for the students and what they find straightforward. Like other kinds of small group activity, this allows the students to test their ideas in a safe environment before taking the risk of sharing them in the wider group. Temporarily taking a back seat, a teacher gives the students space to engage with the material and with each student’s interpretation of it.

Brame (2013) suggested that a flipped approach allows students to progress further up Bloom’s revised taxonomy (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001), so that they meet new material before class and there work with lower level thinking to *Remember* and *Understand*. Later, in class, they work with the higher levels of thinking (*Apply*, *Analyse* and *Evaluate*) with the support of classmates and their teacher.

**Figure 2:** Bloom's revised taxonomy. Adapted from Anderson & Krathwohl (2001)
FLIPPING AND LANGUAGE TEACHING

In the case of language learning, as well as the lower levels of Bloom’s revised taxonomy, we also want the students to achieve the *Evaluate* level where they self-correct their language production, and the *Create* level, as it is there that they begin to spontaneously produce the target language. Every subject area has its own characteristic balance between knowledge and skills. The particular characteristics of learning and teaching languages make the flipped language classroom somewhat different from classrooms where there is a larger body of knowledge that students need to become familiar with. Modern language teaching is much more focused on learning to *use* the target language than on learning *about* it (e.g. Brown & Lee, 2015; Cook, 2016; Ellis, 2012; Loewen, 2014). Some students will want to learn about the cultures within which the target language is used (Chan, 2015), and a subset of students are clearly helped by learning something about the systems underlying the target language (Cook, 2016; Ellis, 2012), but the emphasis is firmly on developing communicative competence (Hymes, 1966; Kramsch, 2006).

The New Zealand Curriculum for the Learning Languages learning area (Ministry of Education, 2007a) is clear that cultural knowledge and language knowledge play a role in supporting communication, but they are not directly assessed in New Zealand: “[t]he two supporting strands [Language knowledge and Cultural knowledge] are only assessed indirectly through their contribution to the Communication strand” (Ministry of Education, 2007a, p.25). This is, of course, far from true in other parts of the world, where explicit language knowledge is assessed in grammar tests, and cultural knowledge is examined with tests of knowledge about cultures of countries where the target language is spoken. If we consider the Achievement Objectives of, for example, Levels three and four in the New Zealand Curriculum, we have the objectives that in selected linguistic and sociocultural contexts, students will: “understand and process information and ideas”, “express and respond to personal needs and interests” and “use cultural knowledge to communicate appropriately”. In addition, they should be able to “recognise and describe ways in which the target language is organised”, “compare and contrast languages”, “recognise and describe ways in which the target culture(s) is (are) organised” and “compare and contrast cultural practices” (Ministry of Education, 2007b). By the time the students are working at Levels five and six, they are expected to be able to “communicate information, ideas and opinions through different text types”, “express and respond to personal ideas and opinions”, and “communicate appropriately in different situations”. In addition they should “understand ways in which the target language is organised for different purposes” and “understand ways in which the target culture(s) is (are) organised for different purposes”.

Some of the Curriculum Achievement Objectives mentioned above concern receptive language competence, others require students to produce the target language themselves, and can only be properly achieved through actual interaction in the target language. It may not be immediately obvious how flipped pedagogy can be helpful here. Table 1 maps these Level 6 Achievement Objectives to activities that are designed to support students towards reaching them.¹

¹ Further reading is available about some teaching approaches and concepts referred to in Table 1: e.g. Task-Based Language Teaching (East, 2012; Ellis, 2003; Long, 2015; Prabu, 1987), Present-Practice-Produce (PPP) approaches (Cook, 2016), Focus-on-forms and focus-on-form (Ellis, 2016; Loewen, 2004; Long, 1991) and inductive learning activities (Cook & Singleton, 2014).
A number of sets of principles have been proposed for the teaching of language in a way that is informed by advances in second language acquisition, e.g. the work of Brown and Lee (2015), Ellis (2005) and Nation (2007). In the following, Nation’s ten principles, are interpreted for flipped pedagogy. Following Nation (2007), language learners need to spend approximately equal amounts of time working with the four strands of meaning-focused input, meaning-focused output, language-focused learning and fluency development. While Nation acknowledges the importance of quality as well as quantity of learning activities in each of these four strands, a balance of activities with different foci, or integrated activities where each strand is well represented, will be needed to ensure language teaching that is in line with findings from language acquisition research. Nation concludes his presentation of research supporting the efficacy of the four strands for language teachers with a list of pedagogical principles organised around the strands, intended to serve as guidelines for teachers. Table 2 shows how Nation’s suggestions about how each of the ten principles could be put into practice might be applied in practice for a flipped approach.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principle</th>
<th>Nation’s suggestion</th>
<th>Flipped suggestion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1. Provide and organise large amounts of comprehensible input through both listening and reading.</strong></td>
<td>This could involve providing an extensive reading programme, reading to the learners, getting learners to give talks for their classmates to listen to, arranging spoken communication activities and interaction via the internet.</td>
<td>Language teachers have always asked learners to read material before class. They can also be tasked with extensive listening outside class time, of audiobooks (adapted for learners or full-text), podcasts (general interest or about language), and viewing video material.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2. Boost learning through comprehensible input by adding a deliberate element.</strong></td>
<td>Note words on the board as they occur in listening, do consciousness raising activities before communicative tasks, get learners to reflect on new items they met while reading and explain problem items that come up in the context of communication activities.</td>
<td>Some pre-task consciousness raising activities can be done through videos before class. Learners can be asked to identify problem items in any pre-class viewing, listening or reading.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3. Support and push learners to produce spoken and written output in a variety of appropriate genres.</strong></td>
<td>Use communication activities in a range of situations, use role plays, match writing and speaking tasks to learner needs.</td>
<td>While speaking will generally be an in-class activity, shy students will benefit from recording their speech privately, in free talking activities that can best be done out of class.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>4. Provide opportunities for cooperative interaction.</strong></td>
<td>Do group work involving split information, opinion gaps and information gaps, and get learners to work together on writing and reading.</td>
<td>Usually, this will be in class, but learners may enjoy meeting online before class to prepare a piece of collaborative writing, e.g. in GoogleDocs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>5. Help learners deliberately learn language items and patterns, including sounds, spelling, vocabulary, multiword units, grammar and discourse.</strong></td>
<td>Do teacher-led intensive reading, give feedback on writing, deliberately teach language items and arrange individual study of language items.</td>
<td>Free writing (not for sharing) at the start of class can be liberating and a way to ask learners e.g. to write what they remember about the last lesson, or a text. Language Perfect or Duolingo or similar can incentivise individual study.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>6. Train learners in strategies that will contribute to language learning.</strong></td>
<td>Work on guessing from context, dictionary use, word part analysis and learning using word cards.</td>
<td>Videos on these strategies could be prepared for the learners to view before class and/or as needed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>7. Provide fluency development activities in each of the four skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing.</strong></td>
<td>Run a speed reading course, include repeated reading, provide an extensive reading programme, do 4/3/2 activities, organise a regular ten-minute writing programme and do listening to stories.</td>
<td>Extensive reading, once established, can be done outside class. Listening to stories together is, however a good use of class time if integrated with interaction between learners.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
8. Provide a roughly equal balance of the four strands of meaning-focused input, meaning-focused output, language-focused learning and fluency development.

Keep a record of the activities done in the course, the strand they fit into and the amount of time spent on them. The pre-class activity is a tool to help up the quantity of input. Teachers may want to prioritise oral production in class, though this can be part of meaning-focused output, language-focused learning and fluency development.

9. Plan for the repeated coverage of the most useful language items.

Focus on high frequency items, use controlled and simplified material and provide plenty of input at the same level. Materials developed for flipped pedagogy can be rewound and re-viewed as required.

10. Use analysis, monitoring and assessment to help address learners’ language and communication needs.

No suggestion is given. If learners’ pre-class activity is monitored and assessed, it can serve as an ongoing needs analysis.

**Table 2:** Interpreting Nation’s principles (Nation, 2007, p. 10-11) in flipped pedagogy

It can be argued that the flipped classroom model will mean that learners will spend much of their out-of-class study time on meaning-focused input (extensive reading, listening and viewing) and language-focused learning (short videos or audio files with explicit teaching about grammar or pronunciation) and much of their in-class time on meaning-focused output and fluency development. This would be reasonable as long as there are robust mechanisms in place to ensure that students actually do the pre-class activities, and that the teacher is working within a weak interpretation of communicative language teaching, using a *Present-Practice-Produce* (PPP) model. The PPP curriculum leads to a course where forms are the organisational principle such that one week covers, for example, the present tense, and the next week the perfect tense (Loewen, 2015). In a flipped context, the first two Ps, *Present and Practice* could be done at home, reserving the bulk of classroom time for the third P, *Produce*, where learners spend time in free language production.

But if the teacher wishes instead to work within a meaning-focused or task-based approach, non-transient material, for example a short video to explain subject-verb agreement in English, that was originally developed for the *Present* element of a PPP classroom can become a resource for individualisation, such that when a student is attempting to construct target language utterances, they can be directed to particular resources at the point of need – just in time, rather than just in case.

**MAKING NON-TRANSIENT MATERIAL**

Advances in software and hardware development have made it increasingly easy to create and share content online. Ubiquitous technology in the shape of smartphones and tablets means that short ‘talking head’ videos or audio content can be very easily produced on the fly and uploaded to sharing sites like YouTube, Vimeo or Sound Cloud. Once it exists, this material is non-transient. That means that, while a face-to-face explanation to a student in a classroom is only available in the moment, a recorded explanation can be shared and viewed multiple times,
as well as being equally useful next year. Students can work together to make their own such explanations, which can be a fun activity in Nation’s language-focused learning strand.

For more complex topics, a screen capture or a PowerPoint with commentary may be more appropriate. This can then be saved as a video file and shared online as above. Sometimes audio or video may feel like overkill and a text-based factsheet might be called for. However, audio and text can be combined. Many students appreciate getting non-transient audio feedback on their writing. This involves the teacher putting the writing on their computer screen and talking through it on the screen, perhaps in combination with writing on the student’s document on the screen. If the writing was sent to the teacher electronically, that simply means opening the document in the teacher’s computer and using free screen capture software such as Jing, Movenote or Screencast-O-Matic or a paid product like Snagit to capture the text being scrolled through on the screen and the teacher’s voice and possibly image. If the text is handwritten or was handed in in hard copy, the teacher can use a camera above the document to film their commentary. Students report finding this kind of non-transient feedback more helpful than just written comments, yet it may not take long to produce for the teacher. To the student, it feels like sitting down with the teacher and going through the text, but allows the student to listen several times, which may be particularly important when they have limited proficiency in the language of instruction.

**CURATING AND USING MATERIAL**

There are a few different ways that materials developed for flipped pedagogy can be used and reused in language teaching. Teachers may collect libraries of digital material (video, audio, text) which can be used for teacher-directed pre-class viewing, listening or reading. Some of this may be material teachers have developed themselves, while other material may be produced and shared by other educators. Sometimes teachers will put time and effort into producing high-quality media that they plan to use in multiple contexts and possibly to share. At other times, material can be produced spontaneously, with little effort, e.g. in response to requests from students or colleagues. Another kind of material is instructions and supporting resources or pre-teaching of forms, which may be produced to accompany a pedagogical task. Teachers can choose to ask students to access material before class in the original flipped classroom model (Bergmann & Sams, 2012) or use the material to individualise teaching and tailor instruction to what each student needs to take part in the classroom activities (Bergmann & Sams, 2014).

The content represented in the flipped material may be grammar explanations or vocabulary presentations, or something as specific as the stroke order for writing characters (in the teaching of e.g. Chinese or Japanese), or videos explicating the pronunciation of speech sounds, such as the excellent material produced some years ago by the BBC for intermediate learners of English (http://www.bbc.co.uk/learningenglish/english/features/pronunciation). Some resources may be at a higher level of abstraction, such as videos presenting spelling rules or writing conventions or how to use reference resources, or be intended to support learner autonomy, such as videos presenting strategies for reading and listening, strategies for speaking and writing and strategies for self-correction.

If a learning management system is available, this can be a way of making video content available to students in a controlled way, or of allowing them free access to the collated resources. If an institution does not have access to an online learning platform, a teacher can
use freely available tools such as Google Docs, Google Sites or WordPress in conjunction with Vimeo, YouTube, Sound Cloud or even Dropbox or Google Drive to make a web-based library.

**PROS AND CONS**

The non-transient nature of the kinds of material produced for flipped pedagogy (Cunningham, 2016) can have disadvantages as well as advantages. As stated earlier, an advantage is that the material can be accessed multiple times, which can be helpful for language learners who may need to listen several times. Different versions of the material can be made available, perhaps with and without target language or English subtitles. However, while this material can be made available for learners to access at their convenience, this may mean that they procrastinate and do not prioritise accessing the material. Teachers may find it useful to limit the learners’ access to the material at certain points of the class, or to assess their understanding of (and engagement with) the material, perhaps making it freely available later for revision or point-of-need access.

Cunningham (2016) suggests a number of ways of ensuring even reluctant learners engage with the pre-class material, such as using the affordances of the online learning platform, or even of programs like PowerPoint, to keep some material, resources or rewards hidden or locked until other activities are completed satisfactorily, as gauged, for example, by self-correcting quizzes. It is important that the less self-motivated learners perceive that their engagement is noticed and rewarded or assessed in some way (Boyer, 2013).

A major advantage of flipped pedagogy and the use of non-transient material is the potential for individualisation. While some learners need further explanation, others do not have to wait until that is complete before proceeding. Videoed task instruction and pre-teaching of forms can let these more able learners press ahead together, while those who need more time can be given a less elaborate or more supported version of the task.

**CONCLUSION**

While many language teachers have been implementing elements of flipped pedagogy for many years, Bergmann and Sams (2012, 2014) popularised the concept, and flipped learning has become very popular in all subject areas. In addition, ubiquitous computing means that many teachers and students have continuous access to video and sound recorders (smart phones, tablets and laptops) and easy and free ways to share content. The teacher’s task is to create, collate and curate material, selecting what is appropriate for individuals and groups of learners, collaborating with students (who may be able to produce material for their own learning and that of others) and colleagues. Once material has been produced, sharing it under a Creative Commons license is a great way to be part of a wider, generous community of language learners and teachers.
REFERENCES


Bergmann, J., & Sams, A. (2012). *Flip your classroom: Reach every student in every class every day*. Eugene, OR: International Society for Technology in Education.


