

# The flipped classroom in 2022: good practices from Varna University of Management

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*Abstract: The purpose of this article is to present some good practices from Varna University of Management related to the flipped classroom approach. We give few examples from the modules – Marketing Communications, Marketing research, Business and Academic English, Project Management. We discuss the advantages and disadvantages of the approach.*

*Keywords: flipped classroom; classroom; Higher education; teaching*

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## 1. INTRODUCTION AND LITERATURE REVIEW

In the recent years, there have been many changes in the way of teaching in higher education institutions around the world. This is due to the Covid-19 pandemic and the technological development in the field of online learning. There are numerous platforms that allow training to be conducted online.

This also led to a change in pedagogical approaches. Quick decisions had to be made to adapt the online environment where learning is quite different from the traditional classroom learning and teaching approach.

The purpose of this article is to present the flipped classroom approach as a suitable method for teaching online and to present some good practices in its application in higher education. For this purpose, some good practices from the disciplines "Marketing Communications", "Marketing Research", "Academic and Business English", "Project Management" at Varna University of Management - Varna are presented.

In the scientific literature, the concept of "flipped classroom" has been defined as an approach in which students engage and prepare with materials previously prepared by their teachers (video, article, books, presentation, electronic materials), and classes are used for discussions, solving specific tasks/case studies and more personalized learning. (Sarparaje et al., 2019; Hamdan et al., 2013; Muir & Geiger, 2015)

Some authors (Headleand, 2020) include in this approach the idea of gamification in education.

The following are presented as advantages of the specified model:

- Increasing student motivation and increasing interaction between faculty and students (Bergman & Sams, 2012).

- Some authors believe that this exploits the fact that modern students communicate online anyway and are easier to reach (Muir & Chick, 2014).
- Reduces the time in which the teacher explains new concepts (Hamdan et al., 2013).
- Equal opportunities are created for students with different abilities and skills (Herreid and Schiller, 2013)
- The method can be applied in many disciplines, including those that are traditionally challenging for students such as mathematics (Muir & Chick, 2014).
- Students learn at their own pace (Panopto, 2022).

Disadvantages include:

- The approach is not always implemented successfully as some teachers have limited technological skills (Geiger et al., 2012; Uzunboylu & Karagozlu, 2015).
- Other authors consider this approach to be less successful (Hagen and Fratta, 2014); McClelland (2013) from the traditional.
- Hagen and Fratta (2014) observed that even motivated students performed worse than in the real classroom. Many of the students had negative perceptions of online learning and felt bad-prepared for the exams because they struggled with self-study.
- McClelland's (2013) finding is similar because some of the students received lower grades than a control group of students taught in a real classroom.

While examining the scientific literature, we found many positive assessments of the approach and little criticism of its possible shortcomings, which should be noted and taken into account even when this approach provides good learning opportunities, both in real life and online environment.

The cultural characteristics of the students, possible technical problems, the need for greater internal motivation, etc. have not been considered. All these issues will be discussed in the next part of this article.

## **2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

For the purposes of this article, we use the observation method and the case study presentation method. We use approaches applied during the online education in Varna University of Management in Bulgaria for the period March 2020 - April 2022.

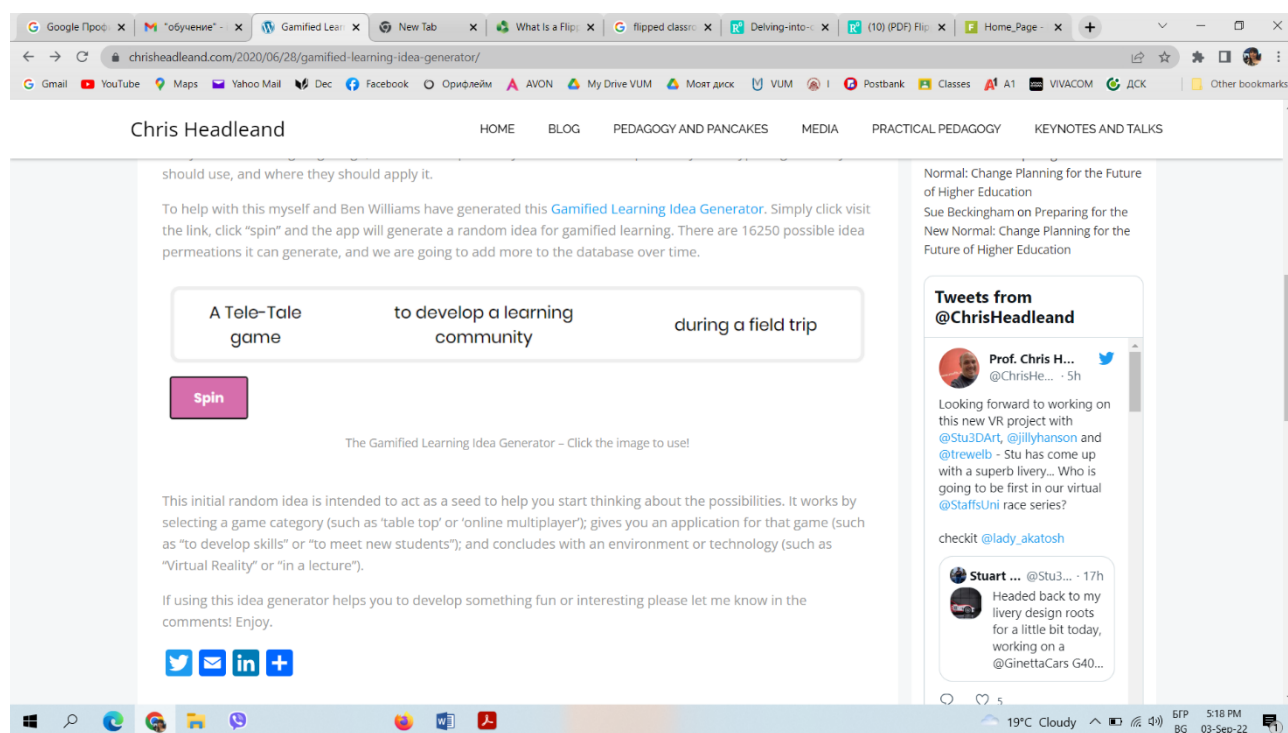
Good practices from the disciplines "Marketing Communications", "Marketing Research", "Academic and Business English", "Project Management" at the Varna University of Management - Varna are presented.

## **3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

In September 2020, before the start of the new academic year, our partners from Cardiff Metropolitan University proposed to test the flipped classroom concept, and for this purpose we were offered various helpful platforms such as:

- Use of e-learning platforms - Google classroom and Moodle, as well as our DEC university platform. All lectures and presentations of VUM teachers are uploaded there.
- Access to Panopto.
- Brief training on recording video content and using the possibilities of discussion forums, Padlet, Kahoot, Quizlet, gamification and others. One of the proposed options involved using a platform that offers educators a different game for each lesson.

Fig. 1. Idea generator for gamification in the classroom



Source::<https://chrisheadleand.com/2020/06/28/gamified-learning-idea-generator/>

The idea behind the proposal was that the lectures would be pre-recorded and made available to students, and the online lectures would have been shorter and include case studies, problem solving and forum discussions.

This was not applicable to us for four reasons:

- The lack of skills for recording and processing video content - a noise-isolated environment, working with training platforms.
- Refusal of lecturers due to fear of negative assessment, shame, etc
- Reluctance to limit faculty contact hours, as the development of video materials is not considered part of contact hours.
- Fear that students will not listen to the lecture in advance or attend live after it is provided to them additionally.

In the end, all the teachers were given the freedom to choose their method, which would be tailored to the specific discipline, but respecting the principle of high-quality education.

During the above period, we taught the disciplines "Marketing Communications", "Marketing Research", "Academic and Business English", "Project Management" at Varna University of Management - Varna.

We decided to apply the mentioned approach and try to make it an active method despite the limitations of the online environment.

For this purpose, we used the following methods:

- Recording all lectures in video format and making them available to students, even without professional processing.
- Provision in advance of all lectures and presentations on the university platform and in the Google classroom for each discipline.
- Use of chat, email to communicate with students during most of the day and to clarify difficult questions for them.
- Gamification inclusion - Gather Town, Geoguessr, Scribbl and others on various issues. For example, Gather Town was used for team communication and to create the feeling that students are together and working together in mini classrooms. In the "Marketing Communications" classes, the Geoguessr platform was used to analyze billboards and their content. And Scribbl was used to revise the material before an English test with pre-set words by the teacher that were studied in class.
- We also used the capabilities of Google Classroom to monitor in real time which of the students participated in writing team projects by creating team files on the platform.

Fig. 2. View of the Gather Town platform from the Academic and Business English classes at VUM

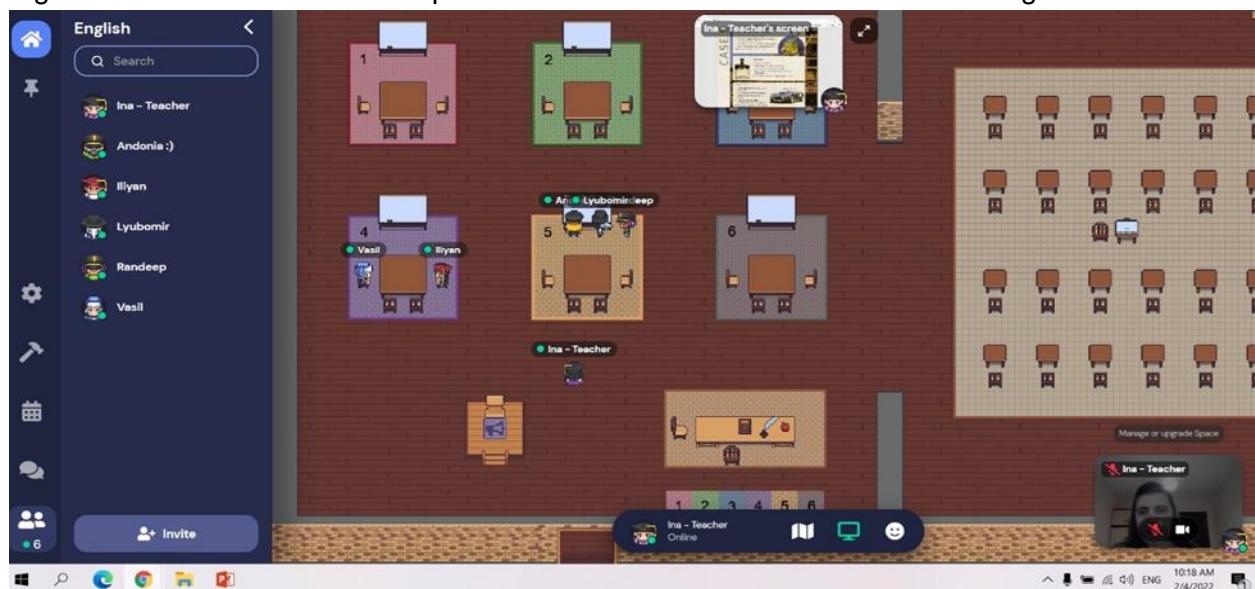
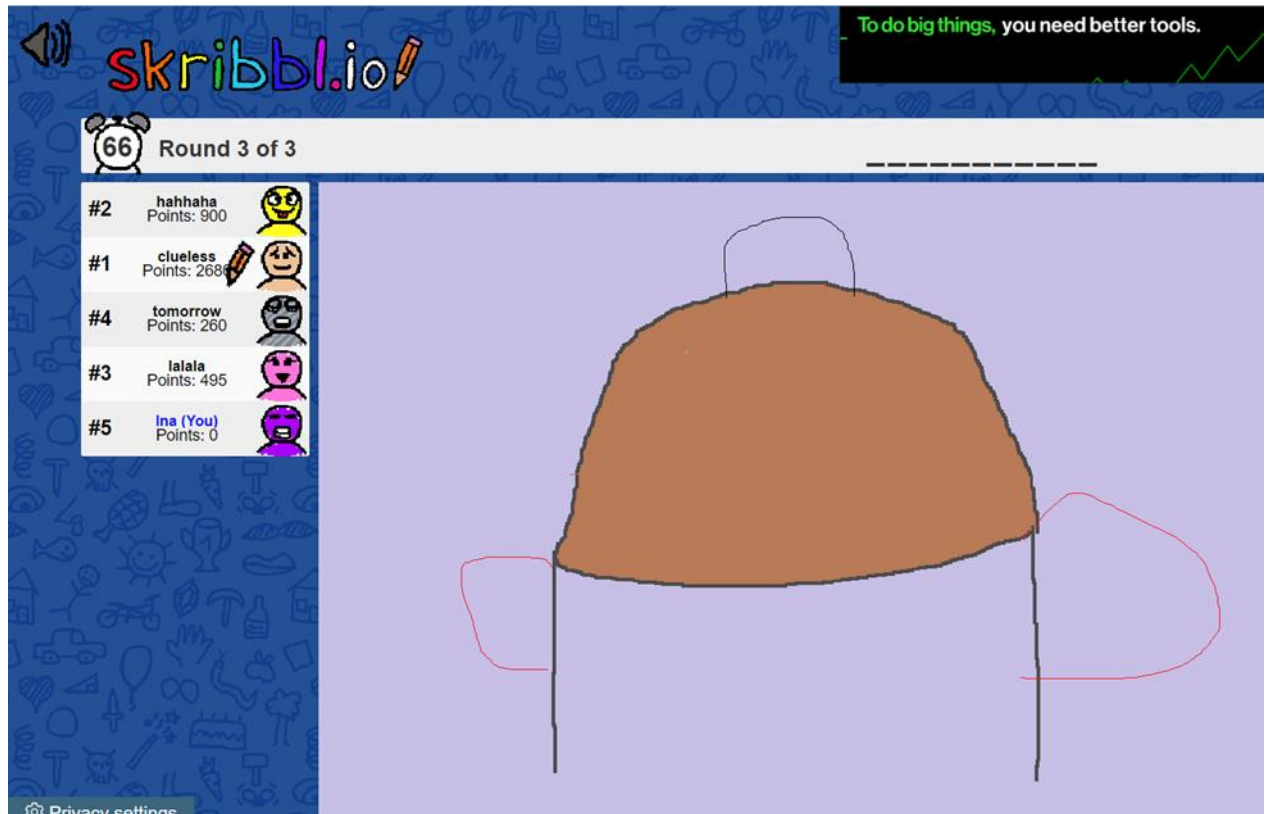


Fig. 3. View of the platform Scribbl.io



As results of the training, we can point out the following observations:

- Students with high motivation during the offline training, kept it during the online training, although they encountered difficulties of a different nature - technical problems, misunderstanding of some concepts and the need for additional explanations.
- The students who showed a non-serious attitude during the live training continued to do so by using the possibilities of the new technologies to justify themselves with them.
- There are also cultural differences – students from some nations had high school preparation to prepare in advance, others felt that once they had the materials in advance, there was no need to attend the online classes.
- During the classes when we used game approaches, interest increased and students who did not come to lectures appeared just because they were told that a game approach would be used.
- Most students appreciated the efforts of the teacher to record video lectures despite the lack of video processing and no noise isolation.
- The majority of students thought it was good to study face-to-face while retaining some of the methods – gamification, pre-provided materials and the possibility of online communication outside of the live classes.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, we can summarize that the flipped classroom approach provides good opportunities in higher education, but also requires serious preparation and skills of

the teachers and active commitment of students. However, we believe that it could be successfully implemented in both online and offline learning.

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