

Please write no more than 300 words on the following topic:

**How have you put blended learning (i.e. combining online and classroom learning) or technology into practice to help your students prepare for an exam? How did you know this method was successful?**

### **Entry from Lei Shi**

To help my students prepare for the speaking test, I registered a channel and created a speaking practice group on YY, a major Chinese video-based social network. The channel is not only open to my students but also anyone else on the internet.

The channel is like a virtual class, where group members participate in regular test-based activities, or an auditorium, where business people have been invited to give live video lectures on business-related knowledge and conduct online interactions, or an entertainment hall, where interesting activities like dubbing competition and spelling contests are run every two weeks.

Friday night is Mini-presentation Time. Those who have signed up take turns making short presentations on the specified topic. Other than myself, four elected judges plus an “Ah” counter focus on grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation and discourse management respectively. We make notes and give constructive suggestions while others comment on text chat.

Collaborative tasks are practiced on Saturdays, when participants are normally paired randomly. In this way, they learn to cooperate with people from different background and with different accents. The built-in recorder on YY enables us to record and keep progress files for group members.

We’ve also launched two sub-channels and elected administrators for each authorized to organize business-related role-play activities. Each sub-group is taken as a simulated company, with group members taking on roles, ranging from CEOs to assistant buyers. The companies keep personnel files, post openings, organize interviews, market their products and do business with each other via email, text/voice chat and video conferences. In the simulated situations, group members learn to deal with people and get to know what they may find in their future business life.

An online survey shows 98% think the channel is helpful, and 96% feel motivated, more confident and better prepared than before.