

Chris Joiner

From: Tony Holland
Sent: Friday, August 31, 2012 3:13 PM
To: Faculty
Subject: FW: And the latest post is...

I just wanted you to know how inspiring it is to see so many faculty stepping out of their comfort zone these past two weeks and implementing engagement activities in their classrooms! The immediate assessment of the activity is crucial to its future success. The goal is to keep the activities short enough and focused enough that the time spent on them reaches maximum effectiveness. Changes can then be made before the next class session, with further assessment of how it could be improved. Please share your positive responses with other faculty, as we can all learn more through collaboration.

The following is an article sent by Ms. Dickens regarding video lectures for online viewing ('flipped classroom'). This may help in answering questions you may have had regarding the process and how it helps you free up class time for discussions, group activities, and other engagement activities. You may want to start with videos on the most difficult topic from each of your units. What we do know from research that is a fact is that the *more engagement and relevant instructional activities*, the more students learn (deep learning), the greater the degree of student success, the higher the retention rate, and the higher the graduation rate. Chris Joiner is available if you have any questions regarding the use and production of these videos.

Thanks!

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Flipped classroom Q&A

Posted: 27 Aug 2012 06:51 AM PDT



The edublogosphere has spent the last two years weighing the pros and cons of the flipped classroom model, and the number of conversations is only growing. The initial buzz centered mostly around Khan Academy and was overwhelmingly positive; the idea of having kids view the teacher's instruction at home and use class time for practice and reinforcement had the potential to transform the education system. Lectures and teachers' direct instruction could happen via video (and could be differentiated for various student levels) so that face to face time would be freed up for critical thinking activities, guided practice, collaborative projects, and so on. It's a fantastic idea...in theory.

Then more critical voices began to emerge: **is this really a new way of teaching and learning**, or is it just a more high-tech way that benefits vendors more than students? What about kids who don't have access to computers at home? Where do the high-quality instructional videos come from—are teachers expected to create all of them on their own? And perhaps most importantly: **if students are still expected to learn by passively watching boring lectures**, have we really changed anything about the way we teach our kids?

I'm seeing a more **balanced and practical approach to discussions about the flipped classroom** these days. But most of the talk is still theoretical: while there are a growing number of teachers who are actually implementing this model, their numbers are still fairly small, and a lot of practical questions abound about best practices.

I was recently interviewed by the **Washington Teacher's Union blog** for an upcoming article to help D.C. teachers determine how best to implement aspects of the flipped classroom, and thought I would share my opinions here, too. For the purposes of the interview, "flipped classroom" was defined as a model of instruction where students learn lessons at home via video and do "homework" assignments in class with a teacher's help.

What are some pros and cons of this method?

Flipping your classroom is a great way to maximize the time you have with students in class. Teachers can provide feedback and guidance to students as they practice, and address misconceptions as they arise. Because the lecture portion of the lesson has already been completed at home, the flipped model allows more time for collaboration and deep critical thinking in class. It also has the potential to **make homework more engaging for kids**, because they're not stuck practicing rote facts each night or struggling to complete assignments they don't understand.

Student access to technology is a really important consideration, and can be a major con for many schools. Kids have enough excuses for not doing homework: with the flipped classroom, "my wifi was out" or "I don't have a

computer” can be added to the list. And if you have even one student who is legitimately without access to the device needed to complete the assignment, you’ve made that disadvantage even more perilous for the student. I used to send glue and scissors and crayons home with kids who didn’t have those materials and needed them to complete projects: I don’t have spare iPads lying around to send home for technology-based assignments. Fair access is something schools need to plan for and consider prior to flipping instruction. Teachers also have to plan for students who choose not to complete the homework: if a student hasn’t watched the instructional video, will s/he still be able to participate in class, and if so, how?

We also have to think about the instructional strategies used. I hear the flipped model lauded as a true “revolution in education,” but kids passively watching teachers lecture them isn’t exactly a new idea. Watching a video of a teacher talking isn’t the best way for all kids to learn in all situations, so we as educators have to really reflect on how lectures fit into our instruction and use them thoughtfully. **There are many other ways** to have kids explore skills and concepts, and those methods can—and should—be utilized in the flipped classroom. For example, I like to see kids create their own videos to explain their strategies for solving math problems or give their take on a literature passage, and then watch and comment on one another’s videos. Homework doesn’t have to be completely teacher-directed.

How is the parent’s role changed when the “flipped classroom” method is used? The teacher’s?

One of the biggest pitfalls of traditional homework assignments is that they’re not a reliable indicator of what students really know. Some parents complete their kids’ homework for them; other kids don’t get any help at all...and the teacher has no way of knowing for certain what each child did independently and what was done with parental (or Google’s) assistance. The flipped classroom model circumvents this problem a little bit, because kids aren’t assessed on what they do at home.

That takes a lot of pressure off of parents who struggle to oversee all the different subjects their kids are learning in school. With the flipped classroom, the parent can actually learn along with the child, facilitate meaningful discussions, and provide critical thinking opportunities. If parents aren’t or can’t be involved with homework, their students will still receive meaningful instruction and be capable of completing the assignment independently.

Whether or not flipped homework assignments are truly meaningful is the point that’s up for debate, and that’s also where the role of the teacher comes highly into play. The flipped classroom is a lot of work for teachers, at least at first. Running off photocopies of worksheets is much easier than preparing or assembling video recordings of lessons. But each year the teacher uses this method, the prep work diminishes. Also, the increased level of engagement many teachers see in the classroom (and the increased homework completion rate) as a result of the flipped classroom model makes the effort worth it.

How does the student’s learning change?

The best thing about educational technology, in my opinion, is that it makes it easier for teachers to differentiate instruction and meet individual students’ needs. I love that aspect of the flipped classroom: students can go back and re-watch lessons that they need additional help with, and remedial or advanced instruction can be provided. The flipped model also **empowers kids to take charge of their own learning**. If they need more time to process information, they can pause the video; if they already understand a concept, they can skip ahead.

Ideally, the flipped classroom model would give students more opportunities to practice **the 4 C's: creativity, collaboration, critical thinking, and communication**. These are really important skills for the 21st century, but teachers rarely have time to incorporate them into instruction because of the amount of material they need to cover for test prep purposes. The flipped classroom is one way that students can have more time to engage in meaningful ways with the curriculum.

Have you flipped any part of your classroom instruction and homework? What works best for your students? What practical considerations come to mind when you think about flipping your classroom?

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