Flipping a Class

Link to additional resources on flipped classes: https://goo.gl/Pd3Ql9

What is a Flipped Class?

A “flipped class” is one that inverts the traditional delivery of content. To prioritize the ability of instructors to work closely with students in class, a flipped class shifts the acquisition of content so that students study it before the class session, and then uses the class session to allow students and the instructor to work together in practice or active learning experiences. The most traditional model occurs when instructors post videos of their lectures for students to view before class, and then class time is used for homework or other activities. Critics say this simply pushes lecture to a different time slot.

Flipped classes are also known as upside-down, backward, or inverted classes. They originated with Jon Bergmann and Aaron Sams at a Colorado High School. Both teachers now contribute to:

The Flipped Learning Network http://flippedlearning.org
FlippedClass.com – the Flipped Learning Experts http://flippedclass.com

Flipping a traditional class is much different than an online class. In most cases, an online (or blended/hybrid) class is already flipped; the students read/study/view materials on their own or at set times before talking with the instructor or other students.

Two Models of Flipped Classes

There are two models currently in the literature:

I. Traditional Flip: Shifting course content (lecture, reading) to outside of class and using in-class time for active learning

II. Mastery Flip: Providing students with an outline and access to material to cover and allowing them to work at their own pace and with each other, and then coming to class for practice and/or assessments. The mastery level works well for online courses (students take assessments after studying on their own)
Five Methods for Flipping a Traditional or Blended Class

1. First, determine if flipping is the best strategy for your course.
   a. What is the best use of your face-to-face time with students?
   b. Are your students at a developmental stage that will allow them to work successfully in a flipped class?
   c. If you flip, what will you do with your in-class time?
   d. How much are you willing to create your own out-of-class materials?
   e. How will you monitor if students are completing the out-of-class work?
   f. Will your course be more successful if you flip it?
   g. Will the students be better off than in a traditional course?

2. Create your course design before the course starts and decide how you will deliver the instruction in the “flipped” manner. Common methods are video, screenshot or screen recordings, annotated or narrated slide shows, commercial or free videos online (TED or YouTube), free online courses, course supplements you create with Versal, SoftChalk, Blackboard or another tool, reading reference material, and podcasts.

3. Identify your active learning/student engagement strategies, matching them with the type of content being taught and the age and life stage of the students.

4. Create assessments that match both the out-of-class content and the in-class activities.

5. Act in increments. Consider flipping only a portion of your class and evaluate the results before deciding to flip your entire class another semester.

Five Methods for Flipping an Online Class

Online classes are already flipped, to some degree. Here are five ways to shift learner content acquisition in ways that may benefit your time with students.

1. Understand that in-class and out-of-class time designators don’t apply to online classes, unless you have synchronous meetings.

2. Focus on flipping the focus of knowledge discovery from you to the students.

3. Invert the design of your course so that class time is not dedicated solely to reading the text and commenting on the discussion board, but includes a variety of student engagement techniques that force students to think at successively higher levels.
   a. Online scavenger hunts, individually or in groups
   b. Create a hashtag for your course so that when students find information they can tag it, even if you don’t use Twitter. Or, create hashtags for different modules.
   c. Provide early and often low-stakes assessments that require reflection and analysis.
   d. Have students create a video playlist of videos relevant to the course (similar to item #1). Music works as well. Post in the LMS.
4. Reward students for finding additional resources and use your students’ energy to create a class knowledge base that you maintain in the LMS. Tap it for formative assessment activities.

5. Have students study similar online classes (or syllabi) at other institutions to see what other topics might be studied, or to help them place your class in context of what typically comes before and after it, making interdisciplinary or even in-disciplinary connections.

**Two Final Tips**

Don’t use the words “flip” or “flipped” with students. Research has shown students react negatively to this terminology. Instead, simply communicate the structure of the course as though you are doing everything as you always do.

Use substantive active learning/student engagement techniques with increased informal assessment (also known as formative assessment) to increase the amount of graded or annotated feedback given to students. This alone can make your course more successful.

Don’t forget the link at the top to the folder with more resources on flipped classes.

---

For help on anything related to teaching at Mercer, contact:
Susan Codone  
478-301-4185  
codone_s@mercer.edu  
http://ctl.mercer.edu