

## How To Series

### Course Design

February 2014

# Flipped Classrooms



## What is a “Flipped Classroom”?

The Flipped Classroom has many origins—some old, some new. It is type of course design which reverses traditional notions of class time and homework. In a sense, it is a new version of previous approaches to making the classroom more active and engaging, thus leading to better student learning outcomes. The active learning movement spans back decades; however, the growing interest and resulting research on active learning classrooms increased in the 1980’s and ’90s.

The Flipped Classroom method came about recently to address a problem. When students engage in difficult homework tasks after class, it can cause problems for them. Can a parent of a high school student help with algebra, chemistry, and research writing homework? Can a college student find tutorial help exactly when they need it? If the concepts and tasks are at a high cognitive level, this situation can be a barrier to learning.

In many disciplines, this idea of preparing on your own for class –and then working at a high cognitive level during class, and continuing application after class – is familiar, as when literature students read texts before class or language students memorize vocabulary, in order to participate in class discussion and activities. In other disciplines, however, the tradition of a class lecture is a staple that is used to convey information that is not readily available or clear. The “new” aspect of the flipped classroom is better technology for videotaping lectures ahead of time which can now be done on one’s own and allows students to view lectures before attending class.

## What Happens in Class?

If we move easier concepts out of the class time—ideas and knowledge delivered by lecture, reading materials, discussions, and other in-class methods—then we can work with our students in class on the more cognitively difficult work. One challenge, though, is how to best use this time.

Consider the following as a response to your intentions for student learning outcomes:

1. Students can problem-solve in class, allowing them to model from your examples and to ask you and their peers for help when they get stuck.
2. Students can work individually and in groups to analyze, evaluate and apply concepts and theories, perhaps through case studies or scenarios.
3. Discussion of material can become richer, involving all students (not just the few “up front”) through application of critical and creative thinking, with guided processes, and using visual methods such as cognitive mapping techniques.
4. Students can generate their own questions and explore multiple perspectives on a topic. For more ideas, see the handouts below.

## How Do I Create a Flipped Classroom?

There are a variety of approaches, yet one key recommendation is to be cautious about “flipping” the whole class. Try a short unit first to see how it works for you and your students. Another key recommendation is to consider how to hold students accountable for the pre-class work. Need help getting started? The links below offer further explanation and suggestions:

- \* [“How to FLIP your Class in 4 Basic Steps”](#)
- \* [“Five Best Practices for the Flipped Classroom”](#)
- \* [Guided Discussion](#) (TennTLC)
- \* [Teaching through Problem-Based Learning](#) (TennTLC)
- \* [Peer Teaching & Peer Learning](#) (TennTLC)

Flipping your classroom is an intentional process, so it is important to consider how you will assess out-of-class work. Here are some suggestions for how to hold students accountable:

- Create a need in students to know “the content that is recorded” (Miller, 2012). How will students reflect on their learning and apply their learning?
- Ask students questions about the flipped readings and/or lectures at the beginning of class. You could use clickers or another classroom response system to collect their answers.
- Set up a “micro quiz”—which is a quiz of one or two questions—on the course Blackboard site or in class.
- Have students pose questions on a discussion board informed by their pre-work.
- Ask them to turn in a short reflection about the readings or lectures before class time.
- Be clear about what students need to know in order to participate in the next class.

Even still, you need to be prepared for unprepared students. Have a plan. Be careful to avoid any group configurations where unprepared students get a “free ride” and have some form of individualized assessment of group work (i.e. peer review or individual quiz), in addition to any work completed by the whole group. Other pitfalls to avoid include:

- Posting hour-long lectures. Break down content into smaller pieces, 10 minutes or less!
- Not connecting the flipped content directly to your class time activities.
- Telling your students that they will be lost if they fail to do the out-of-class work. Give them a specific reason to buy-in and be sure to have a clear assessment plan to hold students accountable.

### Other considerations

1. Do you have a clear rationale in the form meeting a learner-centered need?
2. Will you have support in your department? New approaches may take a few semesters to implement well.
3. Will you videotape lectures? Choices range from the “one-shot” video getting help from [OIT Instructional Support](#).



UT faculty members try out active engaged learning techniques during the 2013 New Faculty Teaching Institute. Flipped Classrooms allow students to deeply engage course content during class time and tackle more basic material on their own.

## R References

- Kolowich, S. (2011). [Exploding the Lecture](#). *Inside Higher Ed*. [insidehighered.com](#).
- Honeycutt, B. (2013). [Looking for ‘Flippable’ Moments in Your Class](#) and Kachka, P. (2012). [Understanding the Flipped Classroom: part two](#). From Faculty Focus.
- Peters, J. (2013) [A Typology of Teaching and Learning](#). *The Creative Professor*. TennTLC online publication.
- Miller, A. (2012) [Five Best Practices for The Flipped Classroom: Best Practices](#). Edutopia.
- Raths, D. (2014). [How to Make the Most of the Flipped Classroom](#). *Campus Technology*. February.
- For an example of the processes of flipping a class, read the Chronicle of Higher Education blog “Casting out the Nines” by Robert Talbert, starting with [“Thoughts of the Culture of the Inverted Classroom”](#) (2011) and [“What Kind of Student Preparation Should We Care About”](#) (2012).
- Video: What is the Flipped? Center for Teaching and Learning Univ. of Texas. [http://ctl.utexas.edu/teaching/flipping\\_a\\_class/what\\_is\\_flipped](http://ctl.utexas.edu/teaching/flipping_a_class/what_is_flipped)

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