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Flippin' Classrooms

Abstract

"Inverted" learning environments deal with sending the spoken lecture home with students as pre-work via online video, recordings, podcasts or other curated content; and bringing the homework into the learning space as activities. Is there a consistent benefit to flipping the standard format of the traditional classroom or is it a YouTube fad?

In Linda M. Gojak's article "To Flip or Not to Flip: That Is NOT the Question!" she admits that she does not have any first-hand experience in using this technique. However, after reviewing the key objectives of deep learning set forth in the "Principles and Standards for School Mathematics", Gojak concludes that perhaps flipping a classroom may not be enough. She is not arguing that flipping a classroom will or will not work; she is stating that a flipped classroom is just as likely to provide instruction that relies on dry rote recall and bland repetition as

traditional teaching. If the instructor does not make a point to incorporate elements that promote full student engagement that lead to a deep understanding then a flipped class will be just as likely to flop. (Gojak 2012)

Larry Ferlazzo, shares a number of responses to the article by Linda M. Goak. One of them being from Peter Pappas, author of a popular blog, "Copy / Paste" who takes a much stronger stance on the efficacy of the flipped classroom than Gojak proposed. Pappas presented the concept as related to us being in the Internet age with access to an abundance of useful technology that was not available previously. He argues that we are squandering an opportunity by not using video to present content around low-order thinking skills at home. (Bloom's: *remembering*, *understanding*, and *applying* steps) He adds that by effectively assigning relevant video content, with multiple options for differentiation, we free up valuable class time for high-level student engagement. (Ferlazzo, 2013)

Jon Bermann proposed a list of “Ten Questions You Should Ask Before You Flip Your Classroom.” The list starts with the assumption that the teacher is considering flipping part or all of their class and guides them through the necessary logistics to set up a successful flip. The most intriguing, and possibly

crucial, questions are:

- How will you train your learners to engage in instructional videos effectively?
- How will your reorganize your class now that you have all this extra time?

(Bergmann, 2016) It seems that that second question speaks heavily to the critique from Linda M. Gojak. You cannot simply flip the classroom and expect great results. You need to flip the class and add engaging activities for the class-participants that promote deep learning and multi-dimensional understanding.

The Center for Teaching Innovation at Cornell University has also entered the discussion on the Flipped Classroom or 'inverted teaching'. The article titled, "Flipping the Classroom" gets directly to the need of having teaching techniques that promote active learning. These include discussions, problem-based learning, group work and other forms of collaborative learning. (Cornell University, 2012)

East Carolina University' website has posted a capstone project about the flipped classroom by a graduate student, Heather Appleton. The article delves deeper into research and evidence of when and how the flipped classroom works. Appleton pulls on the research of Bransford, Brown and Cocking in their work, "How People Learn". The approach is that metacognition empowers learners by

putting them in control of their learning. By focusing on lectures or informational content on their own time at their own pace students are more likely to come to their own conclusions and become more aware of their own thought process. In addition, the increased two-way interaction with the teacher and peers allows for timely feedback that decreases misconceptions. (Appleton, 2018)

Appleton does touch on some of the limits of the theory in identifying that not all content can be flipped and not all students have access to the technology necessary. However, she quickly follows up with examples of free open source web pages that assist instructors in creating media for flipping and she brings up the very valid technique of chunking large topics into smaller modules that can be flipped separately. Appleton concludes by introducing Bloom's Taxonomy and sharing how it can be used for identifying portions of a lecture that can be flipped for home "consumption" by students; and reviews common activities that can be used for classwork. (Appleton, 2018)

I have been flipping lessons for about a decade now and I didn't really know what to call it. In 2004 I recorded sample conversations from a book I was using to instruct English as a second language to a Thai high school class. I uploaded the content to Myspace.com along with images of the text I was speaking. I found

that students had downloaded the Mp3 files to their phones and were drilling with them before speaking tests. It worked because 1.Content was relevant. 2. Content was digestible. 3. Content was easily accessible online 4. Students all had the technology to interact with the content (Computer Lab, Smart Phones or mp3 players) and lastly I used class time to reinforce the content in an open setting based on activities (in this case role-plays.)

In the works, that I cited above the piece that I found most interesting and memorable is the concept of teaching the students how to view educational videos in the "right" way. This really is a crucial element and one that I could see easily overlooked.

To me, the most confusing part of what I have cited is the perspective of Linda M. Gojak, a teacher who has admittedly not even tried the method and is out to prove that it is not inherently beneficial. Surely she has the right to her opinion even if she has never implemented the method. However, it seems most efficient to me to be open to all technology and all teaching methods; to choose the tools that are most likely to serve the content well and improve its delivery.

Flipped learning works for me for all of the reasons stated above. I understand that it is not suitable for all content and it is not something that all instructors would benefit from implementing. However, I have a strong interest in educational technology; video, audio, and eLearning production are passions of mine so I would be foolish to not use them as tools in my efforts to share knowledge. I never enjoyed teachers that stood up in front of the class and told us all how it is, so naturally that is not the way I want to design and implement my learning environments. I want it to be a social spectacle. I want it to feel like a safe natural environment where we all work as a team to bring each other to higher levels of understanding and true performance improvement.

"TED ed" module to simulate an assignment in a flipped classroom, created by David Kolmer:

https://ed.ted.com/on/qL8gKf3z

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