

Using Class Time Differently



One of the major benefits of the flipped concept is that it frees up more class time in which teachers can create engaging learning experiences for their students. It's essential that when instructors flip their classrooms, they put careful thought into how they spend this extra time, if the flipped model of learning is to have the biggest impact possible.

The activities that take place after the learning has been flipped should link deeply with the content of the video that the students have watched before class – and success in these classroom activities should build upon, and reinforce the learning that students have done at home.

This guide gives teachers some ideas for making the most of class time as part of a flipped approach to learning – from project-based approaches to learning, to teacher circulation around the room.

Project-based learning

Project-based learning is most powerful when students have played a part in defining the projects themselves. In economics, students could work together to create a startup business that's underpinned by a series of business concepts explained weekly in a teacher-created video. And in science, students could devise and carry out their own experiments to test a concept that was explained in a flipped video. Set students on an engaging learning journey and they'll support each other, uncover and develop new skills, and have complete ownership over what they create and learn.

Collaborative group projects

In the real world of work, collaboration is becoming an increasingly important and desirable skill. It is important that the classroom mirrors this, and that students are given regular opportunities to work together to solve problems and share their learning. This works especially well as part of a project-based approach to learning.

Practical tasks

One of the best ways to learn is to do - and consuming the initial learning content at home puts students in a great position to deepen this learning by creating, demonstrating or doing something. Teachers should aim to create engaging practical experiences that deepen their students' knowledge after watching the flipped videos. By giving students a choice from a selection of activities, rotating students around dif-

ferent activities, or even having students design their own practical activities, teachers can create and facilitate deeply engaging learning experiences.

Student-created content

One of the best ways to learn something is to teach it. And by creating their own content that demonstrates their learning, students can do just that. Give students a choice over the medium (whether it's a video, a podcast, a poster, a conference-style presentation or anything else that conveys their learning), and they'll usually come back with great content that reinforces their learning. Where this is done as a group, peer teaching will often take place – with different students within a group helping each other to understand the necessary concepts as they work together to create the content.

These videos and podcasts could then be used as part of a flipped approach with other students - fostering a real sense of pride in helping others to learn.

Personalized Learning

Of course, not every student learns in the same way – and with the flipped model of learning, it's possible for teachers to create personalised learning experiences that take into account students' unique needs, abilities and interests. Flipped learning is all about breaking free from the one-size-fits-all approach that's dominated our classrooms for the past century, and as a teacher, you know your students best – so don't be afraid to mix and match different approaches to suit their individual needs. Looking around a flipped classroom, you may well see some students working in groups on practical projects, some students writing a paper, and some students creating their own videos - an exciting, engaging classroom that's alive with learning.

Reflecting on Learning

Reflective learners are the most effective learners. Give students regular opportunities to reflect on their learning and understanding of concepts. This should be supported by plenty of effective teacher questioning, and learning discussions between both teacher and student and students themselves. It can be useful to have students keep their own reflective diaries or blogs - at the end of each class, they could update them to show what they've learned or need to focus on during the next class. Students can also use their blogs or diaries to make a note of any questions or observations they have when watching the flipped videos.

Teacher Circulation

Because the flipped model of learning frees up the time of the teacher during class, any activities should be supported by copious amounts of teacher circulation and input. For many teachers, this shift can be a little strange at first - and in the case of project-based

approaches to learning, it can feel a little strange to 'let go' of directing students' learning along a predefined route.

Flipped Tips

It's always a good idea to cleverly build a 'need to know' element into the learning activities, to help tie the learning in closely with the content in the videos. It's students' responsibility to watch the videos and prepare for class, so their success in activities should depend on them having done this preparation. This is particularly the case in collaborative group project work – just as in the world of work, an unprepared student will let their group down.

If you're following the flipped approach, your classroom or lecture hall will most likely look a little different than it did before! It may be a good idea to let others know what you're up to. If you're being observed during a lesson, it can be a good idea to brief your observer on the flipped model beforehand, to help put them in the picture.

For more resources on flipping your classroom

www.flippedinstitute.org