

Ready to Flip?



Surrender control and structure because students own their learning!

Flipped classrooms are also known as inverted classrooms, flipped teaching, and backwards or reverse teaching. In the **flipped classroom**, there are no lectures—teachers become instructors, coaches or advisors, encouraging students in individual inquiry and collaborative effort. **Flipping** requires teachers to surrender the traditional teaching structure of lectures and homework and how the classroom is organized to give way to a learning environment where students control their learning.

The **flipped classroom** brings great instructional benefits to all students—from the student with cognitive disability who struggles to absorb material to the gifted student with physical disabilities who is ahead of the curve, but bored and unable to go to the finishing line. For students with cognitive disabilities, a **flipped classroom** provides a 24/7 self-paced access to content, extra time for remedial instruction, and classroom time that resembles a quasi-tutoring environment. For the gifted student, a **flipped classroom** allows for access to extra material and learning that moves at the student's pace, following their educational and intellectual interests.

Origins

In 2007, students' absenteeism prompted two chemistry teachers at a California rural school to create an alternative way to reach out to those students and provide a way for them to catch up with content. They started narrating and recording PowerPoint Presentations, storing them on flash drives or DVDs, and giving them to the absent students. Soon the two teachers were using capture software to record classroom lessons. The videos were later posted on YouTube.

The real **flipping**, however, did not occur until the two teachers released students from the constraints of the traditional classroom structure and allowed them to take ownership of their learning. The organizational structure was changed and classroom time was flipped and became a time for content discussions, project development, and problem solving. Teachers became instructors and coaches while students directed their own learning.



Approaches

The **flipped classroom** uses a hybrid instructional design for teaching and learning. A hybrid design uses both face-to-face and distance learning (i.e. videos and digital presentations) to promote active learning and student engagement. At home, students watch teacher prepared video lectures and in the classroom, they engage in content discussions and work on exercises. Classroom work is then focused on developing content mastery, testing skills in applying knowledge, and hands-on activities.

A **flipped classroom** follows two major instructional principles. First, it requires teachers to surrender traditional classroom control and structure and asks students to take ownership for their learning. Second, to flip a classroom teachers need to use alternative means to deliver content and reach out to students who struggle with content. To flip then requires teachers to be acquainted with UDL principles for teaching and learning.

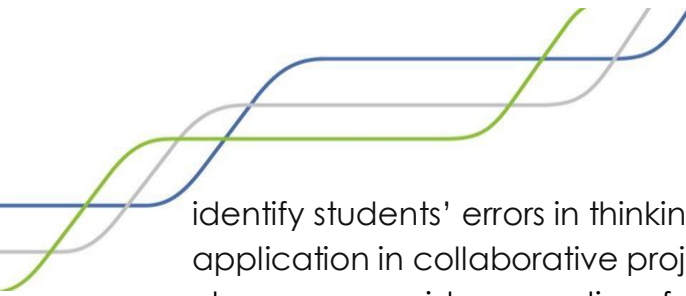
A **flipped classroom** transforms instruction and allows for true differentiation. Recorded lessons put students in charge and in control of their own learning, allowing them to determine the pace of instruction; the hands-on activities in the classroom open up space for a quasi-tutoring environment where students can work closely with the teacher.

Advantages

Flipping a classroom has great instructional and educational benefits for both students and teachers.

Web-based access to a 24/7 self-paced instructional module provides students with ways to catch up with content because of illness, emergencies, vacations, or attendance to sports events. For students who need more time to understand concepts, the availability of a podcast/vodcast means extra time for reviewing, comprehension, and understanding. Being able to actually understand or catch up with missed content enhances student self-confidence and improves achievement. The extra time to view and understand content also cuts down on student boredom from lack of understanding and diminishes classroom behavioral issues.

For teachers, having lessons available in a podcast/vodcast format means more classroom time to focus on students' academic needs, more opportunities to



identify students' errors in thinking patterns or mistaken use of concept application in collaborative projects. For both teachers and students, a flipped classroom provides more time for collaborative work and development of learning relationships between students. The teacher becomes a coach, instructor, and guide, and students own their learning and develop greater self-confidence.

Disadvantages

For students, the biggest disadvantage of a **flipped classroom** method is the digital divide: Not all students have access to computers and/or Internet services. Students from low-income districts who already have limited access to resources won't be able to profit from the alternative instructional method of a **flipped classroom**. For students with cognitive and physical disabilities using IEP prescribed software and applications available at school (screen readers, text-to-talk, etc.), a flipped classroom may pose more challenges. Teachers preparing the podcast/vodcast will need to adapt some of the materials in order to comply with the IDEA requirements.

For teachers, **flipping a classroom** means increase in upfront effort: Planning, creating and developing new materials and activities, recording lessons in a podcast or vodcast format, preparing web-based hand-outs, as well as curating websites to be used as resources. All files will need to be uploaded in condensed format, which will take considerable time.

Teachers also need to re-think classroom time and how that time is used:

1. Integration of materials and activities will be needed to enhance content delivered via podcast/vodcast
2. Classroom activities will need to be designed to motivate students to prepare for class (listen/watch the podcast/vodcast) and to participate in collaborative projects. Teachers will also need to re-think how to best allow the constant interruption and disruption generated by state mandated testing.

For administrators, a major disadvantage of the **flipped classroom** refers to its disengagement from the "teach-to-the-test" model: **Flipping** does not follow instructional techniques to improve standardized tests.



Things to Know

1. **Flipping** isn't about the newest technology or web-based tools...
2. At the heart of a **flipped classroom** is surrender...teacher surrender of classroom control!
3. **Flipping** changes the classroom structure and how teaching is organized and how content is delivered.
4. **Flipping** changes how students access instructional materials, how student engagement occurs, and how interaction between the teacher and students happens.
5. Following the UDL principles for teaching and learning, **flipped classrooms** provide students with alternative ways to access content and multiple means of engagement
6. **Flipping** isn't easy...**flipping** requires planning, preparation and a strong grasp of content—good teaching is much more than delivering good content.

Ready to Flip?

Implementation of a **flipped classroom** requires an upfront effort on planning and preparation. Part of this preparation includes the creation of a variety of instructional materials, from podcasts/vodcasts and narration for a PPT, to curating websites and the creation of digital resources and handouts for each lesson. Implementation of the **flipped classroom** also requires a shift in teachers' perception of students' understanding and grasp of content, as well as a greater understanding of students' learning styles and academic needs.

To create a podcast/vodcast, it is best to use mainstream, open source software such as MP3 file format - widely used and produces good audio quality, Audacity and Garage Band for audio, and iMovie and MovieMaker for video recording. The podcast/vodcast can be stored and shared in public, free educational directories such as GoogleDrive, EDpuzzle and SchoolTube. Sharing of the podcast/vodcast is often possible via the school district website.



Selected Sources

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