4 Tips for Flipped Learning

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As interest in flipped learning continues to grow, so does its adoption among the educational rank and file. By moving entry-level information outside the classroom -- typically (but not exclusively) through self-paced, scored videos -- teachers can reframe learning so that students spend more instructional time engaged in deeper discussions, hands-on applications and project-based learning. With a focus on more direct contact between teachers and students, greater application of basic concepts, and increased collaboration between learners, flipped learning provides yet another outlet for 21st century teaching.

No doubt, making this kind of change can be intimidating. Before teachers flip out, here are four tips to make the transition smoother -- and more impactful.

1. Start with Lesson Goals, Then Build Out

Making a dazzling video without first determining its instructional value is like putting the cart before the horse. It's counterproductive. A more sensible approach: identify the lesson's core objectives, from simplest to deepest, tracing the path of knowledge that students will follow. Lower-order targets (the *what*) should be sorted out for video delivery, while higher-order objectives (the *how* and *why*) should be tagged for deeper exploration. Next, teachers must answer some fundamental questions about the learning process:

1. Once students understand the entry-level information, what will they be able to do with it?
2. What kinds of activities will reinforce these concepts?

3. Will students add value to basic ideas by simulating them through experiments, deepening them through inquiry-based discussion, or broadening them through project-based learning?
4. How will teachers facilitate and monitor classroom collaboration?
5. How will students demonstrate their burgeoning knowledge in these learning laboratories?

Teachers who successfully deliver flipped learning always begin with the end in mind.

2. Use Rich Imagery and Direct Language

Teaching with a visual medium like video is both exhilarating and challenging. Trying to compress introductory information into a five-minute video leaves little room for verbal waste or unimaginative imagery. Once you've identified the core objectives that you want students to achieve, sketch a virtual collage of images, diagrams, or charts that add impact to your presentation. It's not a bad idea to write a script for your narrative, either, and to include cues that will help you seamlessly transition from one shot to the next. Avoid flowery language and long-winded monologues. The inviolable rule of video making: **Be direct, be powerful, and be gone.**

3. Make Videos That Reveal What Students Know

Creating videos is easier than ever with the emergence of free and easy-to-use screencasting platforms like Screenr (https://www.screenr.com/) and Screencast-o-Matic (http://screencast-o-matic.com/). (For savvier video makers who don't mind a price tag, consider Camtasia (http://www.techsmith.com/camtasia.html) or Screenflow (http://www.telestream.net/screenflow/overview.htm).) The more perplexing question is what to do with them post-production. Hosting videos on a YouTube channel or a personal website or blog is relatively easy to do, but doesn't provide much insight into how your students fared during the video (or if they even bothered to watch it). One compelling hosting solution is eduCanon (http://www.educanon.com/), an interactive video environment which allows teachers to create real-time questions that students must answer as they learn. It also features a question-by-question breakdown of student performance and exportable score reports. Microsoft recently announced a similar initiative called Office Mix (https://mix.office.com/Home/GettingStarted), which transforms PowerPoint presentations (version 2013) into interactive videos complete with quizzes and labs. (A fully interactive version for tablets is coming soon.) If teachers can gain insight into what their students know before class starts, they can strategically assign them to specific learning hubs (based on readiness) during "live" instruction, reinforcing the focus on differentiation and investigation.

4. Bring Parents on Board

If the concept of an inverted classroom seems strange to teachers, it's even more foreign to parents. A successful rollout must involve meaningful outreach to parents about the goals, rationale, and logistics of flipping. They are your active partners in educating children, and now that you're ceding some control over learning, you'll need their support more than ever. Onboarding could address misconceptions about flipped learning, provide resources for further study on the topic, illustrate the practice with a sample video demo, and provide examples of live classroom applications. (Great resources are available through the Flipped Learning Network (http://www.flippedlearning.org/site/default.aspx?PageID=1).) Distribute this onboarding packet to parents before the school year begins, with a request that they review it before

this onboarding packet to parents before the school year begins, with a request that they review it before back-to-school night. They'll have a chance to process the information at their own pace -- modeling the same style of learning that their children will follow. In the spirit of learning by doing, "flip" this traditional evening by letting parents deepen their appreciation of flipped learning through live activities or discussions. Conclude with a whole-group discussion about the expectations and execution of a flipped approach. They'll appreciate your candor and transparency, and you'll win much-needed allies.

The payoff from flipped learning is significant. Teachers will recapture instructional time that can be used to deepen learning. Student engagement will likely rise due to more personalized contact with information. And a richer culture of collaboration will emerge among students who learn to work together. Flipped learning means that teachers do less talking and more listening. Their students will flip for that.

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