

Strategies for Designing the “Flipped Classroom”

In the traditional lecture-based approach, students gain first exposure to new concepts by attending class and listening to lecture. While faculty expect students to do the reading in advance, preparation can be minimal: students know that the material will be covered in lecture. Faculty assign homework for students to complete outside of class to practice and deepen their understanding of the material. Homework often exposes student questions and gaps in knowledge, but the instructor is not available to help students. In the “flipped classroom” there is no lecture. Therefore, students are expected to gain first exposure to concepts through readings or by watching videos before class, and they are tested to ensure they prepare. Class time is devoted to active learning. Students are actually doing the “homework” (practice, application, and analysis of concepts) in class, often in collaboration with peers, and they can get help from their instructor and from peers as their questions arise.

Steps for Designing a “Flipped Classroom”

1. *Provide opportunities for students to gain first exposure before coming to class.*

Students can learn new material prior to class through readings (textbooks, academic and nonacademic articles, primary sources), watching videos or podcasts, or interacting with course-specific websites.

2. *Hold students accountable for pre-class preparation.*

Flipped classrooms only work if students prepare for class. Therefore, it is important to hold students accountable for completing preparatory work. Options include online or written quizzes, short writing assignments, or blog posts. These can be completed before class or at the beginning of class.

3. *Design in-class activities that focus on deepening student understanding.*

Resist the temptation to lecture: students have already spent time learning the basics. Use class time instead for practice and for activities that foster deep understanding of concepts. Class activities can assume many different forms, from discussions to experiments, debates, data analysis, or problem solving sessions. All activities should be carefully structured and aligned with the learning goals for the class. The instructor should be available to answer student questions and clarify misunderstandings.

Reference

Bruff, D. (2012 15 September). *The flipped classroom FAQ*. Retrieved from: <http://www.cirtl.net/node/7788>

