

Chapter 11

Inside the Flip: Activities and Motivations in Flipped Classrooms

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ABSTRACT

In today's educational setting of state and federal mandates, teachers are looking for ways to increase student engagement and collaboration in their classrooms. New educational technologies have many teachers exploring the flipped classroom to meet those mandates. In flipped classrooms, educators flip direct instruction and traditional homework. Students might watch a video over a concept at home and then apply the concept to problems in class. For almost two decades, teachers have implemented and research has been conducted on the flipped model. Little of that research exists at grades 6-12, where the majority of teachers using it teach. This study looked inside the flipped classrooms of seven middle and high school teachers from subject areas including mathematics, science, Spanish, and social studies. Data for the study were collected through interviews, lesson plans and materials, as well as classroom observations in order to gain a full picture of the activities taking place inside of flipped classrooms. This study also looked at the teachers' motivations for using the model.

INTRODUCTION

In our current educational era of accountability, with its reliance on high stakes testing and its often scripted curricula, K-12 teachers and higher education instructors are searching for ways to incorporate technology to provide more classroom time for the instructional methods such as discussions, projects, and student inquiry. For K-12 teachers, these activities can address the higher level thinking skills that are designed to be key parts of Common Core State Standards (CCSS) instruction (Hopson, Simms, & Knezek (2001); Huba & Freed, 2000; O'Down & Aguilar-Roca, 2009) and can be applied to Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS). This need has made the flipped classroom model an option worthy of consideration. The flipped or inverted classroom is one in which the traditional roles of homework

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-7998-0242-6.ch011

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(knowledge application) and lecture (knowledge acquisition) have been reversed or flipped (Lage, Platt, & Treglia, 2000). The Flipped Learning Network (2014) formally defined flipped learning as:

A pedagogical approach in which direct instruction moves from the group learning space to the individual learning space, and the resulting group space is transformed into a dynamic, interactive learning environment where the educator guides students as they apply concepts and engage creatively in the subject matter. (para. 5)

The flipped or inverted classroom model has become a grassroots movement in education and this model has been adopted by many educators in the United States and worldwide. The Flipped Learning Global Initiative (FLGI) lists over 29,000 members (FLGI, 2016). One of the flipped classroom model's stated advantages is the process of moving lecture out of classroom time. This is supported by Foertsch, Moses, Stikwerda, and Litzkow (2002) who suggest classroom lectures are a waste of face-to-face time and state, "Most students would have done just as well to read the professor's lecture notes or view a videotape of the lecture on their own time" (p. 267).

Purpose of the Study

With most flipped studies conducted in the higher education arena, there is a need to look more closely at the motivations 6-12 teachers have for using the flipped model. Many flipped classroom teachers note Sams and Bergmann's books or articles as inspiration or note reports including Finkel's (2012) article in *District Administration*, Tucker's (2012) article in *Education Next*, and Goodwin and Miller's (2013) article in *Educational Leadership*. The often-cited reason for employing the flipping of classroom is to allow for more student-centered and hands-on learning activities once lectures have been removed (Baker, 2000; Mazur, 2009; Overmyer, 2015; Strayer, 2012). There is also a need to see what kinds of instructional activities actually utilized in the 6-12 classroom time formerly occupied by lectures. As noted, most flipped studies were completed in the higher education setting and those include only reports of what activities were used in the specific course (Baker, 2000; Demetry, 2010; Frederickson, Reed, and Clifford 2005; Gannod, Burge, & Helmich, 2008; Lage et al., 2000; Overmyer, 2015; Schullery, Reck, & Schullery, 2011; and Strayer, 2012).

Although Bergmann and Sams (2012) state, "there is no single way to flip your classroom—there is no such thing as the flipped classroom" (p. 10), there has come to be an informal definition of flipped classrooms. This is a class in which video lessons or screencasts are available for students to access when it is convenient to watch them outside of classroom time (Hamdan, McKnight, McKnight, & Arfstrom, 2013). As noted earlier, the Flipped Learning Network (FLN) (2014), an organization set up to attempt to set standards for flipped learning as well as to provide guidance and resources, has set up a formal definition of a flipped classroom.

This study focused specifically on 6-12 classrooms and gathered a variety of materials to compare reasons teachers give for flipping their classes to their lesson plans and activities, so that comparisons could be made between reasons teachers gave for employing the flipped classroom model and what actually took place in their classrooms. Finally, those activities were compared to the motivational reasons given to compel teachers to flip their classroom.

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