

Flipping the Law School Classroom: Optimizing the Law School Classroom

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Introduction to Workshop: A flipped classroom turns the traditional teaching paradigm on its head – altering the roles of both the professor and the students during shared classroom time and during time outside of the classroom. See JONATHAN BERGMANN ET AL., *FLIP YOUR CLASSROOM: REACH EVERY STUDENT IN EVERY CLASS EVERY DAY* (2012). In the traditional model, **in-class time** is largely devoted to the delivery of new content. Teachers spend the majority of their time acting as “presenters of information,” while students spend time taking notes. Students draw connections between concepts and attempt to apply concepts **outside of the classroom**, usually without assistance from the professor. In a flipped model, the professor presents new content in taped online videos which the students view **outside of the classroom**. As a result, the **in-class time** is reserved for activities or concepts that would benefit from modeling or demonstration by the professor or from group work.

This past year, I flipped a substantial portion of my Civil Procedure: Jurisdiction course. I observed the following benefits:

- The students engaged with the material outside of the classroom with more frequency and benefited from my guidance outside of the classroom. They came to class with a better understanding of the material.
- I was able to optimize classroom time. I spent more time modeling practical skills and providing guidance to students as they engaged in practical skills exercises. Additionally, I was able to provide more opportunities for productive in-class group work. There is a tremendous amount of flexibility provided by the flipping model. It accommodates a wide variety of in-class activities and teaching styles.
- We created a shared culture of “working to learn.” Students expressed to me that they saw a direct connection between the work they put in outside of class and their ability to master concepts. They came to class ready to work (and excited to learn) and they expected the same of their group members. They also expected me to be able to provide more than a basic presentation of the course content.
- There was a closing of the gap between the top and the bottom of the class. Those at the bottom of the class seemed to benefit most from the guidance outside of class.
- The class performance as a whole improved. Despite the fact that the students in my Jurisdiction class had law school entering credentials which were lower than students in prior years, by the middle of the semester they were consistently out-performing prior classes on objective assessments.

Using flipping techniques, I also taped comments and suggested revisions on student papers in my upper-level Children, Families and the State class to effectively “flip” a portion of the conferences I have with students on their papers. My subsequent meetings were much more productive. Moreover, the students responded positively and improved on their subsequent assignments.

Goals of the Workshop: This workshop will focus on how to *design* a flipped class and will provide strategies for implementing a flipped classroom approach throughout a course.

By the end of the workshop, participants will:

- Be able to identify and explain the advantages and disadvantages of
 - flipping aspects of instruction out of the traditional classroom setting
 - flipping aspects of feedback on student work product out of an initial student conference
- Be able to identify aspects of their own teaching that might be appropriate for a “flipped” model of delivery
- Be able to design a “flipped” class and have a strategy for developing a flipped course

Considerations for Selecting Material to “Flip” out of the Traditional Class

- What material do you currently deliver via lecture (or primarily via lecture)?
- Do you distribute or lecture about background information when discussing a concept?
 - Examples: Historical development of a rule or doctrine; previously overruled cases; former versions of code or a rule; competing legal trends;
- Do you cover basic procedural concepts when discussing a substantive issue?
- Is there a concept/skill that might be better understood if the students were presented with a model?
 - Example: Would the students benefit from observing application of a rule to a set of facts? Would the students benefit observing a skill demonstrated?
- Is there a “hot topic” related to your course that you might want to bring to the students’ attention?
- Would the students benefit from being able to revisit and review a topic?
 - Example: Core concepts; basic application of a rule/test

Possible Options for In-Class Time

The greatest advantage of the flipped model is the flexibility it provides the professor. There are a wide variety of activities a professor could engage in during class time to accomplish their goals for the class. Here are just a few examples of what a professor may choose to do during class:

- Discussion of hypothetical problems that require more complex application
- Live demonstration of a skill
- Engaging students in role playing exercises to teach legal skills
- Group work activity
- In-depth policy discussion/debate

Resources on Flipping Methodology and Teaching Strategies

- **Professor Angela Upchurch YouTube Channel**
<http://www.youtube.com/user/professorupchurch>
 - Click on the Section Entitled Flipped Teaching
 - This section contains a series of videos on to make recordings and strategies in flipping your classroom

- I also have a series of videos that I have linked to that demonstrate and deconstruct the flipped classroom
- **Friday Institute for Educational Innovation (FIZZ Project) at North Carolina**
 - The FIZZ project provides a wealth of short videos that discuss how to design flipped classes at the K-12 level. Many of these can be easily modified to fit the law school classroom. <https://www.fi.ncsu.edu/project/fizz/>
 - The FIZZ project has an online course with taped modules that you can take to learn how to flip your classroom. <http://go.ncsu.edu/fctp-p>
- **JONATHAN BERGMANN ET AL., FLIP YOUR CLASSROOM: REACH EVERY STUDENT IN EVERY CLASS EVERY DAY (2012)**

Technical “How-To” of Flipping

Making Videos

- Screen casting through Screencast-o-matic
 - <http://screencast-o-matic.com/>
 - There is a free version and the PRO version is \$15 per year
 - For a video on created on how to use screencast-o-matic watch <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vKNyCLC2vHU>

Creating a Google Account

- https://accounts.google.com/SignUp?service=youtube&continue=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.youtube.com%2Fsignin%3Faction_handle_signin%3Dtrue%26feature%3Dsign_in_button%26nomobiletemp%3D1%26hl%3Den_US%26next%3D%252F<mpl=sso&hl=en_US
- You will need a Google Account to create a YouTube Account.

Create a YouTube Account

- http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j_y7rrfftbk
- Creating a YouTube Account in an easy way to store your videos and make them accessible to your students. You can control the level of accessibility.