**665 00 Article Why Flipped Classrooms Are Here to Stay**

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Why Flipped Classrooms Are Here to Stay

By Jonathan Bergmann and Aaron Sams

Through much of our respective teaching careers, we had often been frustrated with students not being able to apply the content from our lectures to their work and daily lives. Then one day, after a combined 26 years in classrooms, we had an insight that would change our world.

It was a simple observation: The time when students really need educators to be physically present is when they get stuck on homework questions and need individual help. They don't need the teacher in the room to talk at them and give them information; they can receive that knowledge and content on their own.

We asked ourselves, "What if we prerecorded our lectures and students viewed the videos as part of their 'homework,' and then we used the class period to help students with the concepts they didn't understand?" Thus, our flipped classrooms were born.

How Our Flipped Classrooms Operate

We began using the flipped classroom model in 2006, while we were both teaching chemistry at Woodland Park High School in Colorado. Our students were on a block schedule, meaning they had 95 minutes of class time every other day. Every other night our students watched one of our videos—either online, from a flash drive, or on DVD—as homework and took notes on what they learned. We conducted laboratory experiments during class just like we had always done, but instead of rushing through the lecture and setup to get to the actual hands-on work, we were able to use the entire period to conduct in-depth scientific experiments.

In that first year, we gave the same end-of-unit tests as we had before we converted to flipped classrooms. After comparing the test results from both years, the data showed our students were learning more in the flipped environment than in our traditional classroom setting. Since then, our students' test scores have continued to improve, and the anecdotal feedback from students and parents has been extremely positive.

We would be remiss if we did not mention a few important qualifiers. First, we did not lecture exclusively in our classes before flipping; we have always included inquiry- and project-based learning. Second, we were obviously not the first educators to use videos as an instructional tool. We were simply early adopters and outspoken proponents of the idea. Third, we did not come up with the term flipped classroom. No one owns that term. Although it has been popularized by the media, there is no such thing as the flipped classroom. There are multiple ways to flip a class—we know of at least seven different models. We also realize that flipping is just one of many ways to create radical transformation in the classroom.

Why Teachers Are Flipping

Educators are increasingly pressured to find ways to reach all of their students—each with very different needs. The personalization of education, or differentiation, has been proposed as one solution. The movement toward personalization has much merit, but for a single teacher to personalize education for 150 students is difficult and does not work in the traditional, lecture-based education setting. One weakness of the traditional approach is that not all students come to class prepared to learn. Some lack adequate background on the material, some are uninterested in the subject, and some have simply become disenchanted with the present educational model.

Flipping the classroom establishes a framework that ensures students receive a personalized education tailored to their individual needs. As we present our flipped learning model to educators around the world, we often hear comments about how it is reproducible, scalable, customizable, and easy for teachers to wrap their minds around.

Why Flipped Classrooms Work

Flipped classrooms work for several key reasons. First, "flipping" speaks the language of today's tech-savvy students. In a world dominated by Facebook and YouTube, the flipped learning model allows flexibility in the use of digital devices as part of the learning process. We encourage our students to bring their own devices to school so that they can move along with the content at their own pace.

The flipped classroom model also helps busy students keep up with lessons. Many of our students were missing classes because of sports and other activities at nearby schools. Since our school is located halfway up Pike's Peak, "nearby" schools are not truly nearby and students would spend hours traveling to and from these neighboring schools. We found ourselves having to re-teach lessons to students who had missed lectures. The flexibility of the flipped method allowed our traveling or otherwise absent students to keep up with the class work.

Flipping is especially helpful for struggling students. In a traditional classroom, the students who actively participate in class tend to get the most attention while the rest of the class passively listens. In a flipped classroom, we walk around the room to check on each student and can better help those who are struggling the most.

In truth, the flipped learning model helps every student to succeed, no matter his or her abilities. For example, students can watch the instructional videos as many times as they need to, pausing and rewinding to take notes or read Powerpoint slides at their own pace. During class time, we can personalize the learning experience for students who are having trouble through small-group tutoring and one-on-one instruction.

A flipped classroom leverages technology to deliver low-level instruction and increase both student-teacher and student-student interactions. As flipped teachers, we spend our class time answering questions, monitoring experiments, probing deeper into the content, and guiding the learning of each student individually.

In addition, flipping tends to improve classroom discipline. In a traditional classroom, bored or unruly students can cause major distractions. In flipped classrooms, these students no longer have an audience for their misbehavior and boredom is banished through small group and hands-on activities.

These examples are just a few of the reasons why teachers around the world have incorporated aspects of the flipped learning concept into their classroom settings—and why we believe the flipped model is here to stay.

Jonathan Bergmann, lead technology facilitator at the Joseph Sears (K-8) School in Kenilworth, Ill., and Aaron Sams, a classroom science teacher at Woodland Park High School in Woodland Park, Colo., are the authors of [Flip Your Classroom: Reach Every Student in Every Class Every Day](http://www.amazon.com/Flip-Your-Classroom-Reach-Student/dp/1564843157/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1339531174&sr=8-1). Bergmann and Sams are also the co-founders of the Flipped Learning Network, a non-profit organization with a mission to provide educators with the knowledge, skills, and resources to successfully implement flipped learning.

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