

Common mistakes and misunderstandings about the Flipped Classroom

Opinions and notes from Dr. Renato Cataldo, CEO/Founder,
www.CrazyForEducationLLC.com
Renato@CrazyForEducation.com
314-330-8077 (m)

Preface... Being an “early adopter” educator is not an easy path. My own path started in 1989 (I was 29 years old) as a rookie Assistant Professor at a Pharmacy College in St. Louis, MO. My goal was to develop a national center for computer education and research and transform the college by applying computer technology. Kind of a lofty goal when not a single faculty member had ever used a computer before. My plan was to teach the faculty how to use computers, then integrate them into the classroom, then develop research grants to fund the center. The first problem started with the faculty who thought computers were going to “destroy” education. By volunteering to partner with faculty members and be present in their courses (up to one third of the instruction time) in many of the freshman courses, I could be an example and mentor to the educators and students on the application of computer technology from English composition to Physics. I created VHS videos for faculty and students that could be checked out from the campus library on basic functions like word processing and calculation application in spreadsheets. By 1992, the students were excelling and the research center had won millions of dollars in grants, we had developed the first online Health Education Learning Information eXchange (HELIX).. below image. By 1993, I was a tenured Associate professor and by late 1994, I left the college to start my own company focusing on the same concepts and taking the vision global.



The below are some my notes and thoughts.. not always in that order that can help today's educators think through the process of Flipping a Classroom. As my story began... Being an early adopter educator is not an easy path, but the benefits far out weigh the challenges ahead of you.

The Opportunity

School should be a campus for our imagination.

What if students used their knowledge and skills in the pursuit of solutions? And what if this was directed at solving problems in our community? Such a school would train students for a world of inspired, creative thought, practice and service.

What if every student was well versed in “the 4 C’s”: Creativity, Critical Thinking, Collaboration, and Communication?

Flipped Learning Communities provide an Opportunity for guided in-class learning that goes well beyond the traditional models.

1) The Flipped Classroom has many benefits for students, but students will not always understand those benefits automatically... Especially if they are experiencing a Flipped Classroom for the first time. The Flipped Classroom is especially beneficial for the following:

a. Students practicing and honing self-regulated learning skills.

- i. This is a skill most students graduating from high school need in order to be a productive. By using a Flip Classroom model early in education, students will be comfortable developing their self-regulated learning skills.
- ii. I sent my oldest son to a school that focused on The Reggio Emilia approach (1995). The program is based on the principles of respect, responsibility, and community through exploration and discovery in a supportive and enriching environment based on the interests of the children through a self-guided curriculum. This process would have been perfect

for the Flip Classroom model to accelerate the learning process and help students move forward.

- iii. Students need access to high quality video and materials for learning now and later that is free from advertising or distractions.... That is one of the reasons we created CrazyForEducation.com
- iv. Practicing new learning concepts independently will be an initial challenge for many students and the source of complaints from students and some parents. Educators need to focus on the long-term goal = student achievement improvement.

b. Providing professionally curated materials by their own educator.

- i. As educators, we try to deliver the best materials and education to our students on a consistent and perpetual basis.
 - 1. Unfortunately we are only a small part of our student's lives as they may not always be "ready" for the information we wish to deliver at the time we wish to deliver it at school.
 - 2. A student's life outside of school can be extremely complex and may not allow for any focus on traditional homework assignments.
 - 3. The Flip Classroom model is a perfect blend of access and application for today's students learning styles. A typical classroom may have ten different levels of student capabilities. A key way to service all of these students is to differentiate in class through experiential and problem-based learning.
 - 4. Students who wish to listen to your content on their schedule can do so. Students who need to listen to your content multiple times can also do so without any additional social pressures.

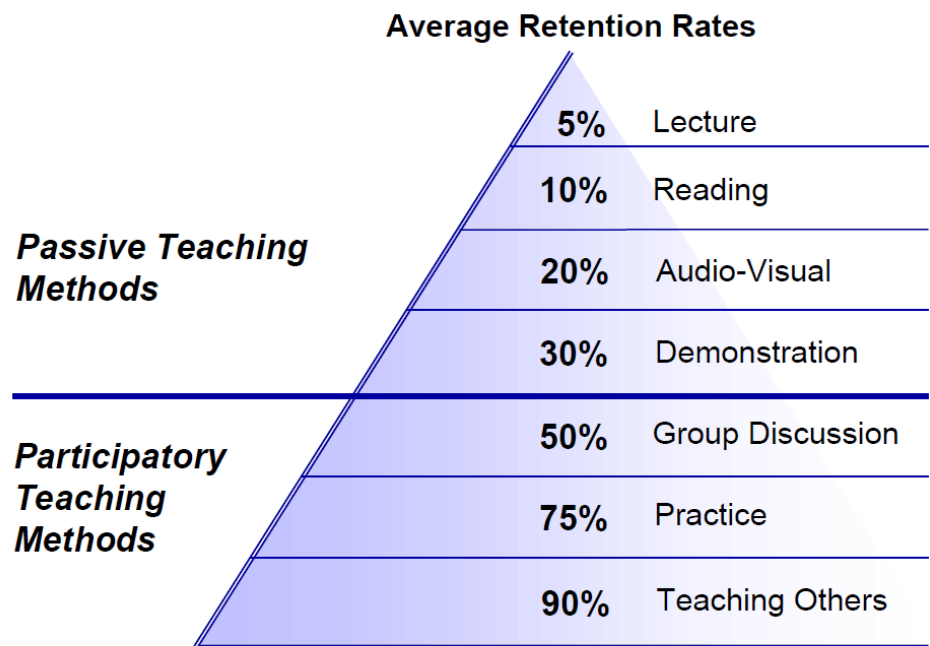
c. Mentorship by the educator and the use of class time.

- i. Students should be working on the hardest parts of the subject when the educator is physically present. This creates an opportunity for the educator to have a deeper understanding of the challenges each student faces.
- ii. Students get large blocks of time to work on activities generated or directed by the educator. For many students, this will be the only concentrated period of time they have for applications of your course content so use it efficiently and wisely.

2) The Flipped Classroom is not about the video. The process of making a video and managing it can be overwhelming for educators. The CrazyForEducation process and software makes the video management less intimidating so you can focus on delivering the best in class experience possible.

- a. The Flipped Classroom is really about..
 - i. Creating connections to the content (your lessons)
 - ii. Developing a bond to the learning community (e.g., peers and educators)
- b. The learning tasks need to be..
 - i. Engaging, relevant, and authentic that all lead towards increased confidence and mastery in the course.
 - ii. Take a look at the Learning Pyramid below and decide where you start and stop with your students. If you can get to Peer-to-Peer instruction, then mastery of the subject becomes highly probable.

The Learning Pyramid*



*Adapted from National Training Laboratories. Bethel, Maine

3) The biggest problem students have with the Flipped Classroom has nothing to do with the content of the course, but rather expectations and simple time and task management.

- a. Students enter most courses with a “grade or score” awareness. This becomes increasing more complex and stressful for those students preparing for college entrance. Your goal is to educate and prepare the student. The “education” and “grade” goals may collide and students in a Flipped Classroom may not appreciate the differentiation opportunities.
- b. An essential part of Flip Learning is intentional guidance on time and task management.
 - i. Between their personal lives and extra-curricular activity, students have little time and often little interest for traditional homework... especially if they do not have a support system at home.
 - ii. Be instructive and directive helping the students use whatever tool they have to manage their time better. That may translate into learning how to use an iOS, Android, and Google calendar functions to help students organize their time.

4) The Flip classroom can seem like significantly more work at the beginning than a traditional classroom.

- a. By using the software and techniques from CrazyForEducation.com most 10-minute lessons can be captured and posted within 15-20 minutes.
- b. If a typical class has 45-50 contact periods in a semester and if an educator made a video lesson for each of those contact periods, the total time needed would be 12-15 hours of recording and uploading. If the educator takes into account the number of times they repeat themselves in semester, the up front investment in time pays off within one semester.
- c. You don’t have to have everything recorded before class begins. Most educators are “Just-In-Time” Flippers for the first two years. They are making their first lessons a few days before the class needs them and continuously creating new ones as the need arises.

5) The Flipped Classroom's success depends on communication.

a. Parents

- i. The educational paradigm of parents is a wide spectrum of sociological, economic, and practical considerations.
 1. I came from an immigrant family in 1964 where education was a first priority and it was often discussed that our home could be mortgaged to pay for a college education. My parents were more concerned about progress than grades. They barely looked at report cards, but always asked was it good enough for college and beyond. I had no clue as my goal was to not stick out and come home unhurt as I thrashed through a complex maze called the "Los Angeles County" school system.
 2. Most parents only know what they went through and many of them may not have the background to help their kids. Explain to them that Flipping the classroom reduces the stress of traditional "homework" at home and allows the educator to focus in on the needs of the individual student. Encourage your parents to watch your lessons online and monitor the class.
 3. Make sure the parents understand that their student may watch your 8-10 minute lessons many times and that is completely normal and acceptable.

b. Students

- i. Communicate regularly with students about why you are Flipping and how it will benefit them. With older students, they will also need to understand that the skills acquired in your class will benefit them throughout their lives.
- ii. Students initially need an understanding of what is their immediate benefit..... 8-10 minutes of video at home and most of their work at school is a great point. The conversation could start... "All homework will be done in class and all you have to do is watch me online for 8-10 minutes a few times a week"
- iii. Students who do not watch the lessons at home are no different than those who do not do homework. Don't be tempted to "re-lecture" in class and this will send a negative message to those who did the work. Find a way to accommodate students who need extra time with the lessons. This may be a computer lab or library access to the video lessons.
- iv. Create opportunities for students to go well beyond what you would of ever provided as "traditional homework". Most

students in a Flipped Class end up completing 20%-50% more work than traditional classes.

- c. Everyone else.
 - i. As this discussion started keep in mind “Being an early adopter educator is not an easy path, but the benefits far out weigh the challenges ahead of you.” Don’t let detractors get in your way. Pioneers need to focus on what is ahead of them rather than the landscape behind them.