

## Flipped classroom 101

### Description

What is a lecture? In the 1980s with Jacques Derrida's radical hermeneutics in full flow, we read about and practiced the *lec(ri)ture*, an inversion of the lecturing format – the insertion of laughter (*ri*) into the standard, conventional idea that knowledge could be delivered by talking to a group of people sitting in front of you.

Scholar of English literature Gregory Ulmer asserted that "a *lecriture* operates by means of a dramatic, rather than an epistemological, orientation to knowledge" (39). From that followed a raft of educative inversions to dramatise the learning experience: e.g. treating the lecture as a form of writing, learning as *misreading*, lecture as a *bricolage*, or foregrounding the "plagiarism" or *logokleptism* evident in all learning.

### The politics of learning

Such play added heat to the politics of education, presuming to displace and *deconstruct* a set of pedagogical conventions. In fact Derrida (according to John Caputo) advocated "Doing an 'inside job' on the institution" (234) by delivering the canonic, conventional and institutionalised knowledge base, but at the same time providing the means to subvert it (the institution and the knowledge).

Such ludic intellectual tactics focussed on the lecture, though those of us in architecture and the creative arts knew about practice-led, studio-based, lab-based and a host of learning-by-doing formats that departed from the conventions of the lecture.

### Home based learning

Move forward to more innocent, practical and perhaps jaded times. Now *deconstruction* gets displaced by *the flip*. The *flipped classroom* style of pedagogy started with high school educators dissatisfied with the usual lecture format in which the pupil attends a lecture, then returns home at the end of the day and does some homework. Why not make the lecture into the homework? Pupils can "attend" the lecture as homework before the class. Then do something else during the class time – answer questions, have group discussions, quizzes, activities. That's the flipped classroom.

The flipped classroom idea simply means the teacher supplies the course content via videos and other learning materials for the students to absorb in their own time, in private, at home, before they come to class. Class time is then dedicated to other learning activities.

In university education it's common enough to require students to prepare before coming to the classroom by reading texts and watching videos, but in the flipped model students watch and listen to whatever it is that would normally be delivered in an actual lecture, but in advance of the class.

According to flipped classroom champions Jonathan Bergmann and Aaron Sams, “The time when students really need me [the teacher] physically present is when they get stuck and need my individual help. They don’t need me in the room there to yak at them and give them content; they can receive content on their own.” (4-5).

A [blog by Kris Shaffer](#) thickens the flipped classroom rationale: “put student work that requires a low cognitive load (such as information delivery or memorization) outside of class so that the time spent in the presence of peers and the teacher can be devoted to higher-order thinking and more complex tasks.”



## Lecturing in the wild

The model is assisted in no small part by online technologies. It’s easy now to make video recordings and upload them to a shared server (Youtube, Vimeo) to be accessed by anyone online. You can protect the material with a password. Specialised screen capture systems such as Panopto ([panopto.com](#)) mean the lecturer can record her lecture while sitting in front of a laptop, and also record Powerpoint slides at the same time.

More adventurous lecturers can go out into the field and record bits of their lecture on a smartphone attached to a tripod, a selfie stick, or propped up against a pile of rocks. Then there’s no need to stop with a talking head and slides. Lecturers can interview people, insert clips from YouTube, edit and resort to a range of production techniques if they have the inclination, time and skills.

Depending on the subject matter, students can be encouraged, or required, to do the same thing. Why not set an assignment that involves an interview recorded on video?

## Online drama

Bergmann and Sams don’t go this far, but there is a disruptive (if not deconstructive) aspect to the flipped classroom model. In further dramatising the lecture, it brings the mediatization of professional life evident in the digital age yet again into sharp relief. In the digital age are we trending towards media wannabes? See [We are all entertainers](#).

Recorded lectures lay the lecturer vulnerable in ways not evident in the transient, faltering and forgiving medium of the one-off stand up lecture. As well as quality content, the lecturer’s gaffs and

foibles can be replayed, mistakes amplified and transmitted. Standing in front of a camera revives the lecturer's early fears about speaking in public.

There are also intellectual property considerations. If it's online then it's potentially everywhere. Then there's the prospect that students won't need to attend university at all. Are universities just distribution hubs?

The flipped classroom plugs into online learning, the growth of which has led my university at least to re-evaluate what it is offering. Online learning of various flavours has led us to think more about the student experience in the round.

As Shaffer indicates, the flipped classroom model also requires the institution to think more about the home situation of the student, or wherever else the student watches the videos. Is home life conducive to such concentrated attention, or perhaps home-based learning percolates into cafes, pubs, foyers, libraries, and public transportation?

Colleagues and I gave the flipped classroom model a serious workout last semester for a class of over 100 postgraduates. I will explain how it went next week.

## Notes

- Also see [Even more radical pedagogy](#).
- The photograph above is a lecturer delivering content in front of Lancaster Castle, England.
- [note added 1 June 2017] For full discussion see our journal article
  - Coyne, Richard, John Lee, and Denitsa Petrova. 2017. Re-visiting the flipped classroom in a design context. *Journal of Learning Design*, (10) 2, 1-13.  
<https://www.jld.edu.au/article/view/281>

## References

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## Category

1. Film and media

## Tags

1. deconstruction

2. Derrida
3. education
4. flipped classroom
5. learning

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