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The Benefits of Flipped Classrooms for Students with Learning Needs

by Jim Paterson | Education World



It's been about 10 years since the idea of flipping classrooms first gained its soaring popularity and good reviews – and in that time it's also apparently grown to help students with special needs.

Greg Green, perhaps the best-known administrator advocating for flipped classrooms, discovered the process (providing

students with lessons at home in videos and then homework and support in the classroom) as he began his career—working in special education.

“That’s where I started teaching, and I found that I could give the students video tapes of the lesson. It allowed the students to play it back or pause it—and got parents involved. They loved it because they better understood what their students were doing and could help them.”

He says that when he had the students in class he could spend more time with them individually. Rather than try to instruct all the students having a wide range of needs and levels, he could tailor a lesson for all online, with extra work for those more advanced and time in the classroom to review for those who might be at a slower pace.

In class he was still busy, moving from student-to-student, but some were working independently, some advancing with just a bit of assistance (often from someone helping in the class—even a volunteer) and others who required a great deal of attention getting it, rather than being lost in a lesson aimed too high for them.

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So a lesson about the branches of government might be supplemented by current events readings or other writings about the courts for some, it might require a brief explanation the next day about some terms for a few and for others struggling, several views of a video and some further explanation. That's time better spent than on a teacher-delivered lesson, where some would be bored and off-task, others would have a variety of questions that would delay the class and others would not understand. That work at the right pace takes place at home, ideally with help from parents and others.

"When we provided kids with accommodations it increasingly also could be handled with technology and now that is even easier to access," he says.

So, experts point out that along with the flexibility of video, applications that allow captioning, easy enlargement of pages or text-to-speech can help special needs students. Mainstream technology now more often offers what used to be considered assistive technology, making it familiar to these students, less embarrassing and more accessible.

Other teachers have reported that flipped classroom approaches are perhaps even more effective with students having special needs than the general population, and Andrea Prupas, an educational consultant working with the approach, reports that it goes beyond just these students learning at home at their own pace.

"We feel that other benefits stem from the fact that the classroom can become a more interactive, collaborative and authentic place for learning," she notes. "We approach flipping the classroom for students with special needs with the idea of doing things differently versus doing different things."

She says flipping can "liberate the classroom for varied, differentiated forms of instruction" and the students can have more time with the teacher or another adult one-on-one which offers "real life connections that are so vitally important to students with special needs."

Other experts have pointed out that both ends of the flipped classroom, like the traditional classroom model, may have to be different for special needs students. In the classroom, for instance, teachers may have to allow time and a place for repetition of the home lesson and plan for the availability of the proper equipment and instructions at home so the student can view and interact with the lesson.

Students with attention issues may find learning lessons online is easier, and if they need to move around a classroom it is less disruptive when the class is flipped and the teacher is engaged with the students and doesn't need everyone's attention at once.

Meanwhile, teachers of English language learners are using technology in similar ways, most notably to support reading and translation (in the classroom and readily on a phone or home computer, now), and teachers in regular classes are finding flipped classrooms can help them meet these students' needs, especially if language is the only thing standing in their way.

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Cara Johnson heads the science department at Allen, TX, High School, where she is known as a vocal proponent of flipped classes.

One of her favorite success stories is about a “brilliant” student from Korea who was struggling in a science class because she knew little English.

According to Johnson, flipping the classroom "helped her tremendously. She was able to watch and re-watch my videos. Since English was difficult for her, and I often speak very quickly, she had the power to pause and rewind the lecture to make sure she understood the message. Also, I had the time to work with her one-on-one and help clarify the concepts with which she struggled. Not only did she learn anatomy in my class, she learned so much English because she replayed the lectures – and my class was a constant conversation between the students and me.”

And for students who have behavior issues, the flipped lesson is an alternative for the person monitoring in-school suspension sessions and trying to track down work for a student or parents if a student is suspended at home. Busy teachers often can't find time to provide work for a suspended student and there are complications with getting the work to the suspension monitor or parent. Sometimes, especially for a student who was off task or missed the class, the work requires explanation that a parent or staff member monitoring suspension can't provide.

And even in an alternative setting, the lessons can be put to use. The alternative center at Edenton-Chowan Schools in N.C. offers small classes where students can access online lessons and keep pace with their classmates. Research has shown that online work is beneficial to students in alternative programs because while they can work on lessons at home, in the classroom “technology allows the role of the teacher to change from the dispenser of information to a facilitator of learning who motivates, assists, and guides students.”

You can find more information at this [blog entry](#) from the Flipped Learning Network and this [page](#) from the Flipped Institute.

Professional Development for Teachers



Upcoming Webinars

SketchUp Pro in the Tech Classroom and Beyond - March 21, 2017 at 4pm Eastern

Wondering how you can use 3D modeling software. SketchUp Pro in your classroom for all grade levels? Teachers Seth Ponder and Matt Jerlecki will join us in this webinar to share how they are using it in their classrooms and tech clubs. You can use SketchUp in language arts, social studies, science, and even math class. Our teacher presenters have some ideas for you. They will show you plenty of classroom examples that you can implement immediately regardless of your school setting. Thanks to a grant from SketchUp your Indiana public school can get a FREE license for SketchUp Pro.

[Register for SketchUp Pro in the Tech Classroom and Beyond](#)

***Webinars last one hour. Attendees will receive one PGP for attending the live webinar.**

For archived webinars visit the [eLearning Lab YouTube Playlist](#).

Do you have a topic you would like us to cover? Or do you have comments or questions about the eLearning Lab? Please contact us at elearning@doe.in.gov.

- **Indiana Digital Learning Month Blog** - Each day in February an educator will blog sharing their best digital lessons including great teaching practices and learning experiences. Be sure to subscribe to this year's [blog](#) so that you will be notified when each day's post is available and to see last year's blog.
- **Instagram Takeovers** - We have turned over our Instagram account to five school corporations for Digital Learning Month. Follow [@INeLearn](#) as they share what digital learning looks like for their students over the course of a week. We started the Instagram Takeovers last school year with the goal to get different 1:1 programs from all across the state to showcase what a week in the life of digital learners and leaders is all about. Do you want to show us how it works and why your class, school, or district is going digital? Apply to takeover our [Instagram](#).
- **Winter eLearning Book Club** - Our Winter eLearning Book Club will be kicking off February 6th, the first full week of Digital Learning Month. Join us as we read Launch: [Using Design Thinking to Boost Creativity and Bring Out the Maker in Every Student](#) by John Spencer and A.J. Juliani. Join the conversations with other educators around the state on the book club [blog](#).



Professional Development for Teachers

Digital Content Workshop Tour



The Office of eLearning, with the help of the Rockstars of Curation, traveled the state to offer Digital Content Curation Workshops throughout the 2015-2016 school year. This tour will continue throughout the 2016-17 school year. These workshops are intended to support beginning districts and teachers who are just starting down the digital learning path. Teachers are given the opportunity to learn about digital resource vetting, organization, distribution, and responsible use. Teachers are also encouraged to take what they learn and share with their colleagues. Our goal is to grow this network of teachers and encourage collaboration within districts and across the state. While the work of curating digital content is on-going, working together makes the load lighter.

Digital Content Workshop Tour dates and locations (all workshops will be held 9-3:30 local time):

- March 15, 2017 Wabash Valley Education Center (West Lafayette, IN) - Registration is closed
- April 12, 2017 West Washington Community Schools (Campbellsburg, IN) - [Register here](#)

If a district is interested in hosting a workshop, please contact elarning@doe.in.gov.

Opportunities for Students:



DESIGN, MAKE & TINKER CAMP

Discover inspiring ways to imagine, design, invent, tinker and make through hands-on projects, interactive challenges and collaborative creations. This week-long camp fosters creativity, builds confidence, and sparks interest in science, technology, engineering, math and the arts. Every youth can be a maker - so let's start making!

Min 10/Max 20 participants

Dates: June & July

Time: 9:30 am – 3:30 pm M-F

Grade Levels: Vary by location (entering grades 1st-8th)

Locations: Decatur Central, Fishers, Franklin Central, Traders Point, Zionsville

Cost: \$225 or \$199 Early Bird pricing until 4/30/17

Registration Ends: one week prior to start of camp

INDIANAFIRST

For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology



IndianaFIRST is an organization dedicated to growing FIRST robotics programs in the state of Indiana. Founded in the fall of 2001 as the Indiana-based affiliate, IndianaFIRST brings FIRST programming to students in grades K-12, teaching them hands-on skills in engineering, science and technology that they can relate back to their class work.

FIRST (For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology) is a multinational non-profit organization that aspires to transform our culture, making science, math, engineering, and technology as cool for kids as sports are today. FIRST was founded in 1989 by Dean Kamen, inventor of the Segway Human Transporter, and designs its robotics programs after a traditional high school sports model, creating an ultra-competitive, highly engaging experience for students and the adult mentors who lead the teams. Kids compete against other kids in local, state, and regional competitions in what is frequently called “The Super Bowl of Smarts.”

For a list of Indiana FIRST programs, [click here](#).

What PRISM Can Do For You!

- Easily find the perfect teaching and learning resources from our library of over 4,000.
- Save a list of your favorite resources for quick retrieval.
- Create and share lesson plans that teach your subjects utilizing your favorite resources.
- Develop online classrooms with interactive assignments, lessons, quizzes and more!
- Store your classroom materials online so that they are available to you from any computer.
- Reach your students more effectively by using web media for the digital age.
- Earn PGP points by completing PRISM led online Moodle course – either Beginning Moodle or Intermediate Moodle courses are available to you at no cost several times throughout the year.
- Select from free learning resources that emphasize visualization, rich context, staged-problem solving, and electronically enabled collaboration / communication.
- Augment your own dynamic presence in the classroom with teaching tools that mirror the skills needed for success in higher education and the 21st Century workplace.

Through our strong support from the [Lilly Endowment](#) and others, we are constantly growing and improving. Check our site regularly to see what new resources you can use in your classroom.

www.rose-prism.org