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Technology for Teachers

Flipped Classroom

In our increasingly technology-driven world, innovation has become a tool that drives almost every aspect of life. In the realm of education, that is no different. Teachers and administrators are always looking for new, better ways to educate students and utilize the newest technology to do so. One fad that is catching some steam is the idea of the flipped classroom, which basically takes the normal school day and inverts it. This way of conducting class is very technology-driven and can be utilized in very powerful ways to ensure that students grasp material and that only the pertinent information is covered.

When I first read about the flipped classroom, I thought it was a terrible idea that removed responsibility and importance from the teacher. After going through all the pertinent information, I definitely changed my opinion on the idea. I think it is a great idea as far as remediation and being able to assess immediately what material the students grasp and what they do not grasp. The class time can be sent on assessment and then covering common areas of issue. Feedback becomes a constant part of class and can be given immediately so that students know where they are and what they need to work on. I like the idea mentioned in one of the articles that the one-on-one interaction with the students in class, because the teacher spends less time talking AT he students and more talking WITH them, would improve communication and build stronger relationships between the teacher and their students.

Some other benefits that were mentioned were that students can skim through the stuff they already know in the videos and can rewatch the information they need to learn as many times as they need to. Also, once in class and working on assessments, the teacher can monitor the progress of the students as they do the “homework.” One drawback that was directly addressed was that of ensuring that the students actually watched the lessons outside of class. One of the teachers from the articles set his process up where the students had to post questions about the material every night, which they could only do effectively after viewing the lessons. Other drawbacks and questions still loom, however. The ability to access the technology outside the classroom is a huge issue. One of the articles suggested giving the student time during class or having them stay after to utilize technology. Another article denounces these as improbable because many schools lack sufficient technology for multiple classes to utilize. Also, some students are unable to stay after school because of transportation issues. Also, the flipped classroom idea seems to have the students spending an inordinate amount of time. If every class used this format, the students would be at school all day and then spend hours at home watching videos for the next day. What if they play a sport or other after-school activity? What if they have a job? They will not have enough time to complete everything.

While the usage of technology creates new ideas daily, some are more feasible than others. I think the flipped classroom idea is only applicable in doses and as part of a normal classroom. Having lessons available online is a great idea but it cannot be the only way the students receive instruction. It’s also a great idea for students who were absent, like a couple of the articles mentioned. Committing to this format 100 percent is too much, in my opinion. So yes, I think technology will transform teaching but this idea of the flipped classroom is not some next wave ideology. It is just not plausible, especially for lower socioeconomic areas.

I will not have a flipped classroom but some ways to make one effective are just using it in doses. Have lessons that are usually difficult available online so that students can go back and try to relearn the information. Many parents lack some of the knowledge necessary to help their children with school work so having some lessons that are usually a struggle available online can only serve as remediation and help the students. The biggest topics in history, like the Civil War and Reconstruction, the Civil Rights era, and a few others, would be well-served as having both classroom instruction and flipped classroom techniques applied because of all the material that is covered. But again, access is the main issue. The greatest positive of the flipped classroom is the constant immediate feedback, so that just needs to be adopted more into a classroom, flipped or not. It is nice to know what grades you make and where you stand in a class and the flipped classroom provides that in heavy doses.

There are some great ideas within the flipped classroom ideology but, as a whole, I do not see it as a practical application 100 percent of the time. I think it is a great tool that should be utilized as a strategy that allows more information to be covered and as a tool to use when students are absent. However, I find it difficult to believe that students will have the access they need all the time and we cannot penalize them for things they cannot control. The implementation of technology is inevitable and is usually a positive but reality slows the progress because lower socioeconomic areas struggle to keep up.