
Flipped classroom concept application to Management and Leadership course for maximizing the learning opportunities

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Abstract

This paper examine the concept of flipped classroom concept and its application on a virtual learning environment ahead of class. In today's fast-paced technological world, professionals are busy with work-life commitments and this approach will enable them to review the course contents within their own comfort thus maximising class time for working on real-time case scenarios for personal and professional skills development.

Then paper begins by explaining the Flipped classroom concept and the method of implementation within my classroom. I will consider strategies to apply the concept effectively so that learners can achieve maximum benefit from this approach and I can provide differentiated learning. The approach will be considered in line with the popular learning theories and key pedagogical principles. I will than critically evaluate my learners experience using this new approach and the benefits it has given to their knowledge and skills developments.

Introduction

This paper will focus upon the application of the flipped classroom pedagogical concept within my classroom. The idea is build upon the work of Bergmann and Sams (2012) on flipped classroom model. As we are moving away from the industry driven education system where the main focus of the classroom was to produce the workforce for filling the gap in industry to a knowledge based economy where information is easily accessible by individuals or groups for personal and professional growth, thus a new era deserves a new style of teaching and learning. I always have a consistent desire to learn and practice new methods and styles where my learners can have the best possible opportunity for learning. Similar innovative teaching and learning approaches have been used by Abbot (2012) in business education to provide interactive learning and Strayer (2012) to promote peer to peer interaction. Therefore, I have decided to use flipped classroom concept as I believe that this will help my students to learn effectively and develop their personal and professional skills.

I teach the Chartered Management Institute (CMI) qualification of management and leadership at level 5, 7 and 8. This qualification is designed for managers and leaders to develop personal and professional skills so they can maximise organisational growth. The key concern I have with the traditional teaching approach is that an excessive amount of time is spent in

content delivery, which minimises opportunities to develop practical skills through knowledge-share amongst learners by working through occupational and organisational scenarios as argued by Bergmann and Sams (2012). Therefore, I have decided to use the flipped classroom model as in my view application of this method will create more skills development based opportunities through discussions, project work, case studies and scenarios. Also it will create time where I can support my students on a one to one basis hence a differentiated opportunity for my students.

In this subject specialist conference paper I will look at flipped classroom concept application where I will provide an opportunity to my students for learning the course contents on a virtual learning environment and CMI management direct ahead of class as suggested by Bates and Pool (2003) teaching can be more effective with the use of technology. In my view in today's fast-paced technological world, professionals are far too busy with work-life commitments and this approach will enable them to review the course content within their own comfort thus maximising class time for working on real-time case scenarios for personal and professional skills development.

I will start the paper by explaining the flipped classroom model and the method of implementation within my classroom as suggested by Bergmann and Sams (2011), and Bergmann and Sams (2012). I will consider strategies that allow the model to be applied effectively to enable my learners to achieve maximum benefit from this approach with differentiated learning. The approach will be considered in line with the popular learning theories and key pedagogical principles by highlighting the key benefits and drawbacks as examined by King (1993). I will then critically evaluate my learners experience using this new approach and the benefits it has given to improve their knowledge and skills. The paper will conclude with the key benefits of the flipped classroom in comparison to the traditional model for my learners. In addition, it will highlight the learner's achievements and satisfaction with this new approach.

My Journey of the Flipped Classroom

My journey of the flipped classroom started during my lesson observation feedback where I have shown a desire to introduce a new method of teaching, which can further enhance the learning experience of my students. My course tutor suggested to look into the flipped classroom as recently this has gain significant attention within the education community. I began to research the approach and found that this concept could be very useful in particular context of my learners, course and institution as suggested by Abbot and Abbot (2012). I teach a management and leadership course, which has an excessive amount of learning material available online through the college virtual learning environment and CMI management direct therefore; this will be an ideal opportunity to use the flipped classroom approach. After detailed consideration of the pros and cons of the approach for my learners in comparison to Gerstein (2012) I proposed this new idea to my students and highlighted the potential benefits. My students liked the idea of coming to the session pre-prepared with the contents by using the online resources to be delivered from CMI management direct and college virtual learning environment so they can discuss and practice to master their skills.

The Flipped Classroom Definition

The flipped classroom is a pedagogical concept in which the understanding of the lesson contents is done at home and the application through practice is in the classroom, therefore this reversed model is becoming known as flipped classroom. In this approach students study the learning material at home with the aid of podcast, vodcast, lecture notes or any other learning resource before the class session and when they come to the classroom they are involved in creating knowledge through class activities, individual or group projects and group discussions. Generally, video lectures are considered as an important part of the flipped classroom model as these lectures are produced by the course tutor and made available online or distributed using other media sources. A pre-recorded lecture in any audio format is known as a podcast and a video lecture is known as a vodcasts. As today's technology has made the pre-recorded lectures in any format easily accessible from anywhere in the world, therefore the flipped classroom concept can be easily applied. According to Petress (2008) the idea of the flipped classroom is to create an active learning environment where students are fully engaged. In my view the idea of flipped classroom transformed the classroom into educational laboratories where students can master lesson content, improve skills by applying knowledge and interact with peers during activities. Also this idea is further supported by the study of contributed students by Collis and Moonen (2006) which suggest that the role of instructors in 21st century is to facilitate learning by coaching and encouraging students in individual and collaborative effort so they can become leader of their own learning journeys.

The Flipped Classroom in Practice

The flipped classroom has no specific model representation as the term is broadly used to convey almost any classroom environment that provides lesson material in advance of the session in any format followed by in class activities. As I teach management and leadership courses (Chamberline, 2012), which have global and cross cultural implications (Abbott, 2012), therefore it demands that the learning should take place in a way that mirror the actual management and leadership context in business so the learners can develop their skills to fulfil the demand of their complex role within business (Martensson, Milsson and Bild, 2008).

In one particular model, I give students learning material in the form of short videos and lecture notes to view before the session, which are available through college virtual learning environment and CMI management direct and when students arrive for the class they perform lesson related activities to test what they have learned. I give them constructive feedback and rerun the identified complex lesson contents to clarify points of confusion. I also engage them in class discussions by Pose, Pause, Pounce and Bounce questioning strategy so they can construct their knowledge further by working together and practicing the concepts they have learned ahead of class. As a facilitator I suggest various approaches, clarify content, check understanding, monitor progress and provide one to one support. I only use few elements of the flipped model, which I feel are best suited to fulfil the need of my learners (Bonk, 2009).

Recently, a large number of higher education institutions started using various forms of the flipped model in their classrooms. As stated in EDUCAUSE (2012) that Algonquin College successfully used flipped model in their video production class to explain software editing. In this approach they used video clips to allow students to work at their own pace ahead of class and learn the software. This approach allowed tutors at Algonquin College to support their learners to build confidence in their skills to apply creative ideas in class. Also Penn State

accounting department effectively used flipped concept for their students with the aim that they can utilise class time for discussion and problem solving. Similarly a physics professor at Harvard University used flipped model for his students and developed an interactive website to support the use of the flipped model for online discussion and feedback with the aim to build online learning communities (Swan, 2002).

The Flipped Classroom Significance

In my traditional lecture students take notes and try to capture the concept while they are listening. Unfortunately, the dynamic nature of the traditional lecture does not let them to reflect instantly on my arguments and they fail to capture essential essence of the session while recording notes (Tucker, 2012). In contrast with the flipped model, students pre-visit the lesson contents to empower themselves to take control of the session. In this approach they can read, watch and repeat as needed. This flexibility also provides opportunities to address different ability and special need concerns. This helps the students with English as a second language to understand the contents at their own pace. This also helps me to underpin any knowledge gaps and take remedial action. The collaborative learning environment encourages peer interaction among students from various skills and let them learn from each another to become communities of practice as suggested by Wanger (1999), and Collis and Moonen (2006).

The Flipped Classroom Benefits

The flipped classroom experience created more time for me to interact with my students at individual and group level to fully understand their learning needs and support them accordingly. The key benefits I had from flipped classroom concept application include an opportunity of advance planning and organisation of content delivery. I was also able to reuse and update the learning resources with ease this enables students to access and progress at their own pace as discussed by Jones (2008). I had more class time to represent contents, discuss complex topics and work with students individually or in groups on practical class activities for personal and professional skills development as suggested by Chepya (n.d.). In addition, I was able to prepare students for a future as global citizens to play their role effectively (Collis and Moonen, 2001). Furthermore this allows students with different learning styles and abilities to learn at their own pace as argued by Bergmann and Sams (2012)

The Flipped Classroom Drawbacks

According to Bergmann and Sams (2012) like many other pedagogical models the flipped classroom can be applied incorrectly if no advance planning is done. Despite the simple concept there is still preparation required for an effective flipped session. I realise that the preparation of lectures notes in advance requires an effective time management, contents and class activities have to be carefully selected for learners to fully benefit from the flipped model (EDUCAUSE, 2012). Therefore, before I decided to introduce the flipped model I re-evaluated my skills to understand the development need, however for some instructors it could be challenging to balance with their workload requirement. Also some students may have an issue without face to face sessions if they feel that the posted contents are of a generic nature and are accessible to anyone (EDUCAUSE, 2012). Those who hold this point of view will take long time to understand the benefits of the approach. Furthermore it might have an impact on attendance as some students might not consider class activities as important for their learning (Bergmann and Sams, 2012). The biggest drawback I come across of this approach was advanced planning, preparation and selection of relevant contents as this requires time, strong motivation and

excessive energy. I struggled at the beginning by spending much of my weekends and evenings from home in planning and preparation but with time I managed to overcome these difficulties. Another drawback I come across during this whole process was lack of interest from some students, which I manage to overcome by budding them with higher ability and motivated students. There was not any impact on the attendance due to this approach as it is compulsory at my institution (Bergmann and Sams, 2012).

The Flipped Classroom Future

In my view as the flipped classroom concept develops and popularity increases, new innovative and creative ideas and tools will be readily available to fully support the concept. The ongoing development and affordability of smart mobile devices will diversify educational resources and encourage flexible learning (Eastwood, Coates, Dixon, Harvey, Ormondroyd and Williamson, 2009). Also, as the benefits of the flipped classroom are fully appreciated by institutions there will be collective efforts to transform the culture of teaching and learning with a unified approach (Strayer, 2012). To further benefit from the approach I have put forward a business proposal for developing an integrated content delivery platform from CMI and college.

The Flipped Classroom and Bloom's Taxonomy

The flipped classroom provides an opportunity to students to learn the contents before attending the class. The idea is to address students learning at the lower level of Bloom's taxonomy so students can remember and understand the contents by reading lecture notes or view the videos. As the student comes to the class they involve in activity based learning individually or in groups thus giving them an opportunity to master their knowledge and skills by working on the higher levels of Bloom's taxonomy by applying, analysing, evaluating and creating new knowledge and understanding as shown in figure 1.

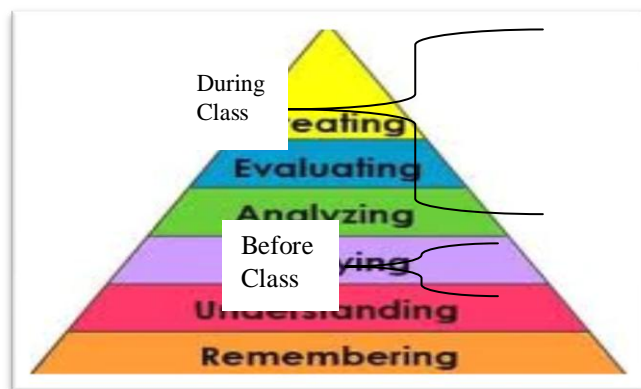


Figure1: Bloom's Taxonomy (Anderson and Krathwohl, 2001)

The Flipped Classroom and Learning Theories

Historically the role of a teacher has been to spread their knowledge during class time and giving homework to reinforce learning (King, 1993). In this approach students were not encouraged to interact with each other and critically evaluate their understanding of the theoretical concepts. Kings (1993) argues that "this passive nature of learning is known as the transmittal model as this assumes students as empty vessels into which knowledge is being poured." In my view this approach might be effective for producing the workforce for the industry but have very little impact in today's complex information age where success relies on

independent thinking to manage risks and issues. By contrast the flipped classroom is part of constructivist learning theory in which learners create their own knowledge based upon their previous experience (Brown, Collins, & Duguid, 1989) and teachers are the learning support not knowledge transmitters (Rhodes & Bellamy, 1999). In the flipped classroom approach students are able to actively create their knowledge in a meaningful manner that allows them to both better understand and process the learned content as detailed in figure 2 (Gerstein, 2012).

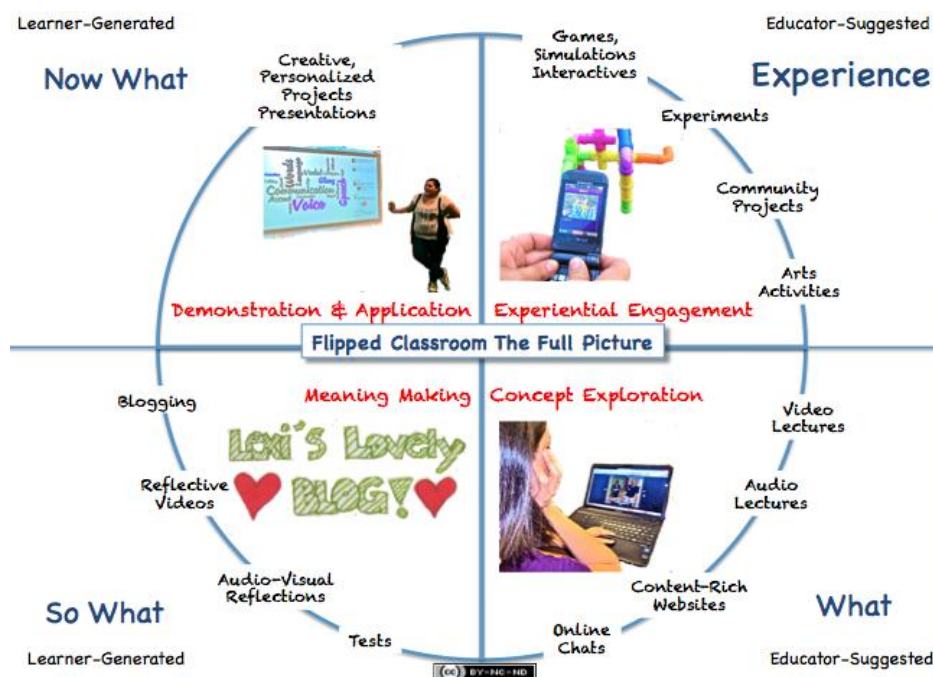


Figure 2: The flipped classroom model of active learning (Gerstein, 2012)

The Flipped Classroom Vs Traditional Approach

To fully understand my students learning experience it would be useful to review the differences between the traditional and flipped classroom models. In the traditional model my students have to be present for every session and class time is consumed mostly with the content delivery with a brief question and answer session. I use to assign students home work activities relevant to their assignments to work on them at home which often were not completed especially for students who have jobs. In a flipped model my students view the lecture resources online ahead of class. So they are ready to work on the class activities and discuss amongst themselves any issues or concerns (Tucker, 2012).

Conclusion

Since I started flipping my classroom with well prepared learning material in advance my class turns into an education laboratory where students came to the session well prepared and fully engaged into the class activities. I have received very positive feedback from my students as the current setting is helping them to understand the theoretical concepts into occupational context and hence develop greater insight into the real world of management and leadership.

The flipped concept offered a new direction that helps higher education institutions to meet the expectations of today's students by providing modern teaching and learning resources.

The flipped model offers a great use of today's innovative technology, which has made it possible for learners to gain access to the information on the move (Gerstein, 2012). The flipped concept is driven by the constructive learning theory and provides the active leaning environment with added benefit where teachers are able to use modern technology to engage students into the learning process (Gerstein, 2012).

The flipped classroom method requires knowledge of technical skills, theoretical underpinning and pedagogical expertise to implement effectively. Therefore teachers are advised to see flipped model application into their area of practice before they plan to implement as this will build their confidence to overcome any potential difficulties. Also they should connect with their communities of practice for help and further guidance on the learned experiences shared by their peers (Shimamoto, 2012)

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