What Is Flipped Learning?

While often defined simplistically as “school work at home and home work at school,” Flipped Learning is an approach that allows teachers to implement a methodology, or various methodologies, in their classrooms.

To counter some of the misconceptions about this term, the governing board and key leaders of the Flipped Learning Network (FLN), all experienced Flipped Educators, have composed a formal definition of “Flipped Learning.” Explicitly defining the term may dispel some of the myths repeatedly promulgated by teachers, the media, and researchers.

These Flipped Learning leaders also distinguish between a Flipped Classroom and Flipped Learning. These terms are not interchangeable. Flipping a class can, but does not necessarily, lead to Flipped Learning. Many teachers may already flip their classes by having students read text outside of class, watch supplemental videos, or solve additional problems, but to engage in Flipped Learning, teachers must incorporate the following four pillars into their practice.
The Four Pillars of F-L-I-P™

F Flexible Environment

Flipped Learning allows for a variety of learning modes; educators often physically rearrange their learning spaces to accommodate a lesson or unit, to support either group work or independent study. They create flexible spaces in which students choose when and where they learn. Furthermore, educators who flip their classes are flexible in their expectations of student timelines for learning and in their assessments of student learning.

L Learning Culture

In the traditional teacher-centered model, the teacher is the primary source of information. By contrast, the Flipped Learning model deliberately shifts instruction to a learner-centered approach, where in-class time is dedicated to exploring topics in greater depth and creating rich learning opportunities. As a result, students are actively involved in knowledge construction as they participate in and evaluate their learning in a manner that is personally meaningful.

I Intentional Content

Flipped Learning Educators continually think about how they can use the Flipped Learning model to help students develop conceptual understanding, as well as procedural fluency. They determine what they need to teach and what materials students should explore on their own. Educators use Intentional Content to maximize classroom time in order to adopt methods of student-centered, active learning strategies, depending on grade level and subject matter.

P Professional Educator

The role of a Professional Educator is even more important, and often more demanding, in a Flipped Classroom than in a traditional one. During class time, they continually observe their students, providing them with feedback relevant in the moment, and assessing their work. Professional Educators are reflective in their practice, connect with each other to improve their instruction, accept constructive criticism, and tolerate controlled chaos in their classrooms. While Professional Educators take on less visibly prominent roles in a flipped classroom, they remain the essential ingredient that enables Flipped Learning to occur.