

Collegiality in action: Developing teacher capacity to effectively flip the classroom in higher education

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The Flipped Classroom is increasingly considered as an effective pedagogy in higher education (e.g., McLaughlin et al, 2014; Roehl et al, 2013; Missildine et al, 2013). Universities are promoting this pedagogy as both a strategy that aligns with contemporary student expectations and engagement, whilst being a cost-effective and student-centred approach to learning. Based on several flipped classroom projects that we have conducted since 2011, the greatest obstacle for implementation of flipped learning is seemingly teacher capacity to transfer this pedagogical concept into successful classroom practice. Formal evaluation data and anecdotal evidence have indicated strong willingness from many teachers to use a flipped classroom approach, but low confidence and ‘know how’ to translate the flipped concept into real-life practice was a common issue. Our presentation will showcase our current learning and teaching project that aims to design professional learning to support this changing environment in higher education.

Our project has three clear initiatives that include:

- Capacity building workshops and symposia to nurture flipped classroom champions across the Australasian higher education sector. These activities highlight our peer-reviewed “7 steps to effective flipping” approach
- Dissemination of our research findings for wider adoption across the sector and further benchmarking of standards in higher education
- Evaluation and scholarship in flipped learning, providing an evidenced-based framework to enhance student experience.

We are using a scholarly multi-pronged evaluation approach that includes:

- surveys and focus groups with teachers (and students) using RATED CLASS A checkpoints (Scott 2008)
- document analysis by project team, workshop participants and external evaluator, using RATED CLASS A checkpoints
- flipped classroom workshop observation by project team, identified champions and external evaluator
- analysis of tasks completed by student in flipped classes in relevant checkpoints from RATED CLASS A framework

- quantitative analysis of participants, eg, student achievement, participation and satisfaction levels.

In year 1 of our project, we have run flipped classroom workshops for over 150 academics across 7 universities in Australasia. Workshop evaluation data indicates that participants felt more capable and confident to implement flipped learning, with communities of practice forming to progress flipped initiatives. Other participants have run flipped class workshops for their own colleagues, demonstrating effective dissemination.

Arguably the most significant pressures on current academic practice have been increases in student diversity, more flexible teaching delivery modes, and expectation to prepare students for the graduate world (Fry et al, 2008). Flipped learning has been identified as a means to alleviate some of these demands. Our presentation will demonstrate how our project is contributing to professional learning for academic practice in contemporary higher education.

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