

Chapter 2

Flipping Learning!

Challenges in Deploying Online Resources to Flipped Learning in Higher Education

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ABSTRACT

Recently, there has been considerable interest in deploying the concept of the Flipped Classroom within higher education - a blended mode of learning which typically deploys online resources to provide more focused learning opportunities for learners at home, with lecture-time re-oriented to facilitate discussion and collaborative learning approaches. Much has been written about the success of particular online social media technologies such as wikis, podcasts and blogging sites in supporting open, distributed and situated learning, within active eco-learning systems such as Personal Learning Environments (PLEs) and online communities of learning in higher education. This chapter presents a meta level review of emerging and emergent challenges of integrating online resources to flip the learning in higher education. The recommendations call for the reorientation of prevailing learner, educator and institutional cultures and contexts so that learner centred, autonomous, flexible learning experiences can be facilitated when flipping learning within higher education.

INTRODUCTION

Many 21st century educators are striving to find more active and creative ways to engage their students. Student attendance and engagement are significant issues in University settings so, in theory at least, the promotion of more active approaches to teaching and learning (that ideally include blended learning configurations) should help increase attendance and levels of students' interaction within courses. One example of an active learning approach is the flipped classroom model. The flipped classroom model is effectively a strategy utilising online resources that can help facilitate transition from traditional didactic

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lecture-formats towards active and participatory approaches to teaching and learning (which are more motivating for students). This chapter endeavours to outline some of the emerging and emergent challenges in integrating online resources, including Web 2.0 technologies, in higher education, and considers them in light of current moves towards *Flipped Classroom models* within higher education institutions.

BACKGROUND

The *Flipped Classroom* is a blended model of learning that essentially reverses what would traditionally be considered classwork and homework. Therefore, lectures that used to occur in face-to-face settings can instead be accessed through online technologies at home, and face-to-face class-time can be used for discussion, problem-solving and collaborative work. This flipped form of learning can support a myriad of pedagogic approaches within web-enabled learning eco-systems, particularly where participatory, social technologies are harnessed to support and transform the learning experiences. In this regard, online resources (such as: social networking sites, wikis, blogging sites or micro-blogging facilities) are being used to support open, distributed and situated ecologies of learning such as Personal Learning Environments (PLEs) or online communities of learning in higher education (Schroeder, Minocha & Schneider, 2010; Carroll, Diaz, Meiklejohn, Newcomb & Adkins, 2013; Su & Beaumont, 2010; Greener, 2009; Glassmann & Kang, 2011).

PLEs can be perceived as a suite of social media tools that allows the individual learner to source, organise, create and/ or share resources, viewpoints or learning experiences or as an emancipatory pedagogic framework that enables learners to exercise greater control of, and take greater responsibility for, their own learning (Häkkinen & Härmäläinen, 2012; Dabbagh & Kitsantas, 2012). Online communities of learning offer opportunities for learners and educators to communicate, interact and share perspectives, resources, experiences and/or expertise; and thus to engage in the co-construction of knowledge and become more informed critics of published works of their peers and others. As such, online learning communities have the potential to liberate learning from the constraints of singularity of context, convergence of perspectives and over-reliance on educator created resources and educator expertise. Online resources, including Web 2.0 and social media sites, can be used within PLEs and online learning communities to enable learners and educators co-create and publish content, connect and cultivate relationships with people (Greenhow, Robelia & Hughes 2009), communicate ideas, and collaborate with others within or beyond the existing community of learners (as highlighted by Redecker, Ala-Mutka & Punie, 2010).

There is little doubt that these online resources and social media technologies can also provide new opportunities and spaces for learning within models such as the *Flipped Classroom*, through the deployment of technologies that have been described as “‘dynamic’ ‘interactive’ ‘democratic’, ‘people centric’, ‘volatile’ ‘social’ and ‘adaptive’” (Brown, 2012, p. 15). However, research into the integration of PLEs, online communities of learning and other online learning ecologies have revealed significant challenges in the integration of these online technologies within higher education. Similarly, the review of literature undertaken for this chapter, has unearthed significant challenges to the effective implementation of social media and other online resources within higher education settings. The nature of these challenges casts some doubt on the likelihood of academics successfully implementing a *Flipped Classroom* model.

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