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# Flip Your Lessons

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More and more educators these days are experimenting with flipping lessons. In some schools, entire grade levels or subjects areas are flipping. And in the case of one Michigan high school, the entire school implemented the flipped approach and has seen steady positive increases in student outcomes, such as graduation rates and college acceptance rates.

Flipping is an instructional model that came to the forefront in the early 2000s and involves moving the lecture part of a lesson online via technology and “homework” into the classroom. Technology is an essential component of flipping because lectures are posted online for students to view using video recording tools such as YouTube. Teachers using the flipped model may use prerecorded videos such as those available on Khan Academy, or they may create their own videos for lectures.

## Flipped School Counseling

If school counselors are to reach all students, then a strong delivery format for core school counseling curriculum lessons is a necessity. Flipping the delivery of large-group or classroom lessons may help alleviate some of the day-to-day challenges of school counselors, who often feel pulled in many different directions. More importantly, using a flipped approach may lead to more consistent content delivery and provide more effective and efficient classroom interactions between school counselors and students.

What follows are the accounts of three school counselors who have experimented with the elements of flipping, how they did it and their critique of this approach. Although each of these school counselors went about it a different way and used different tools, they all were motivated by the same need, to reach all students and to maximize their time.

## Flipped Course Registration

**Franciene Sabens, LPC, NCC**

**School Counselor, Chester High School, Chester, Ill.**



Course registration can be a daunting task for high school counselors, especially those who are a department of one in rural schools like me. For years I ran registration the only way I knew how. In December, I would produce a guide with deadlines and details relating to the process for administration and staff, prepare the registration paperwork and secure copies of the course description book. In January, I would send directions and packets to each homeroom to be disseminated to the students and follow up with small groups during advisory periods. What resulted from doing it this way was a disproportionate understanding of the registration process and some instances where students did not receive the materials. I wasn't reaching all students or getting the desired result.

After reflecting on what worked and what didn't, I kept coming back to the fact that all students weren't getting the same message at the same time, and parents weren't informed enough to truly understand the process as it related to career development. Clearly it was time to change, so I decided to flip the process. To flip, I created a [presentation with Prezi](#) with a voice-over created in Vocaroo because both are free and easy-to-use. Prezi is also web-based, so I knew I would be able to post the presentation on the school's website and send a link to parents via our student information

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system.

On the day of registration each advisory teacher handed out registration materials and then started the presentation using the Prezi link I provided. As they listened to the Prezi, students were guided through the entire registration process and began completing their forms. Students were also informed, through the Prezi, about lesson objectives, deadlines and when and where they could access additional assistance as they completed the course registration process. Following the presentation students were expected to update their individual learning plans (ILP), student portfolios and course registration documents on their own or during optional small-group sessions.

With the newly revised process, I noticed that students were paying more attention to their ILPs, and parents were asking questions about them. I also found that students were selecting courses with increased intentionality. As a result, our AP course offerings grew 150 percent as we welcomed online AP courses to meet students' career prep needs. The administration also appreciated the new format, but not as much as the teachers did. One other benefit of this flipped model was that I didn't even have to be in the building while the lesson was happening. I was at a conference in Kentucky as my students were beginning the registration process. I created an opportunity to pursue continuing education and fulfill my school counseling duties at the same time.

Despite the positive outcome, I realized there were limitations of flipping without including a face-to-face component in the classroom. I missed the opportunity to really advise the students as they were making decisions based on their future courses and career plans. As I plan for course registration in the future, I will again be following a flipped model, but I will incorporate face-to-face time into the process. Following the Prezi presentation and distribution of registration materials, I will visit every advisory homeroom to provide assistance to students. Combining the Prezi with face-to-face time with the students in a classroom setting will maximize my time and our student outcomes in terms of course registration and career development.

#### **Matthew W. Sowers**

##### **School Counselor, Mary Ellen Henderson Middle School, Falls Church, Va.**

It has become an arduous task for me as a middle school counselor to deliver classroom lessons in a consistent fashion. Due to the academic demands and high expectations placed on students, it's becoming a challenge to find a way to reach all students and to balance all the domains: academic, career and social/emotional.

My school district uses an online learning management system (LMS) to deliver content and information directly to students and families and provides laptop computers to every student to use throughout the school day in both middle and high school. Thus, I started to explore the possibilities of reaching students virtually through our school's LMS. I heard about flipping from a high school teacher and coaching colleague and decided to try it.

I've now used the flipped method for several lessons; the most recent one I created and posted to our LMS was to generate excitement around our annual career fair. To create the video for the lesson, first I identified the content and the standards I would cover in the lesson and then completed all of the research on the content before writing a script for the video. I timed myself reading the script to know how long my voiceover should be in the video. Then I opened my tool of choice, VideoScribe, and input pictures from the tool's library and incorporated various colors, fonts, etc. VideoScribe specializes in whiteboard animation with the ability to use voiceover and offers a free trial period. I recorded my voiceover in one take from start to finish, watching the animation as I read my script. This took a little practice. Before I finalized the video, I added royalty-free music from Jamendo, and once the [video was uploaded to YouTube](#), I gave credit to all resources I used.

After I posted the video to the LMS, students in the entire school had access to it. I posed questions in the LMS for students to answer, and there were opportunities for commenting to both school counselors and peers. I provided informal follow-up opportunities in the lunchroom or homerooms so students could ask questions during the week of the lesson.

With flipping, I was able to use technology to deliver school counseling content more frequently and with higher engagement through our LMS system. The informal student feedback has been positive. However, after flipping a few lessons so far, I have learned that there should be a more formalized process to monitor students' views and answer follow-up questions. I'm looking into ways to adapt the

lessons for improved accountability.

### **Kato Gupta**

#### **College Counselor, Plainfield High School, Plainfield, Ill.**

As a first-year college counselor at a high school that hadn't previously had one, all the programming I implemented in my rookie year was an experiment. Little did I anticipate the effectiveness of the changes I would make to the college counseling programming in its second year, namely, flipping. The daily schedule allots each student one 25-minute, teacher-monitored study hall, which is when I was expected to conduct any of my lessons. It was common to present as many as 18 iterations of the same lesson during any given week. It became nearly impossible to provide any other services during those weeks, not to mention that presenting grew quite monotonous.

At the end of my first year, I sat down with my department head to brainstorm other ways for managing these lessons. It was in this conversation that the idea of flipping emerged. It made much more sense to show the presentation as a video to each study hall one day, and then spend the rest of the week making visits to each classroom to deepen discussion and address questions. A year later, this efficient solution has become the format for teaching all school counseling core curriculum.

My flipped lesson, "Map It! Freshman Group Guidance," included several steps. First, I created a PowerPoint presentation, and in the notes section at the bottom of each slide, I wrote a script of exactly what I would say when recording the voiceover. When the PowerPoint was completed, I converted the presentation to photos of each slide. In iMovie, I inserted the photo slides and created a new project. From there, I recorded a voiceover for each slide while reading the script. After recording, I processed and saved the video. To make the movie accessible to faculty, students and families, I posted the video to [my YouTube channel](#).

As all school counselors know, time is of the essence, and the time I have saved in using the flipped method has been invaluable. During the weeks I conducted these lessons, I used to spend nearly nine hours just presenting the information. That time is now spent visiting classrooms to follow up on the lessons and answer any questions students have. During my classroom visits, it becomes evident to me fairly quickly which points I must reiterate and which were clearly understood. This interaction allows me to gauge ways to improve the video portion of the flipped lesson in the future.

Flipping also allows for efficiency and consistency. I am able to present the precise information I wish to articulate in a more condensed, concise and consistent manner to all students. Also, because I posted the flipped videos to my YouTube channel, our school website and our college and career website, all faculty, students and families have access. After showing the video, I e-mailed the students' parents to let them know I'd shown the video and included a link so they could also watch it.

The principal challenge I face in flipping is gaining faculty support, a common challenge faced by many school counselors in general when it comes to providing services. Prior to showing the video, I e-mail each study hall teacher with explicit directions for showing the video, with the link to YouTube included. I ask that after they've shown the video, they follow up with a confirmation e-mail. With everything teachers are asked to do, it is sometimes difficult for them to remember to show the video and e-mail me with confirmation. In the future, I may try to communicate with teachers through various methods including attending department meetings and communicating with the department chairs, who can underscore the lessons' importance. In its first year, I wanted to master the process of creating and showing the videos. By next year, I hope to be comfortable enough with the process to move on to the data collection and analysis that is necessary when implementing new methods of programming and service delivery.

Flipping, in its best form, strikes a balance between using the technology necessary to keep up with modern educational methods for engaging students while also incorporating the face-to-face interaction they still need.

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#### **For More Information**

"Flip Your Classroom: Reach Every Student in Every Class Every Day," by Jonathan Bergmann and Aaron Sams

[The Flipped Learning Network](#)

[Edutopia Flipped Learning Resources](#)

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