

## Flipping the Classroom

While not new, “Flipping the Classroom” is a well-known concept that, when powered by today’s technological advances, can result in engaging and measurably effective learning solutions. In a departure from the familiar traditional classroom, the “flipped” classroom delivers lectures outside the classroom setting, while “homework” occurs inside the classroom where an instructor can provide assistance and feedback. With virtual classrooms, mobile learning and networked information-sharing technology, today’s learning professionals can push the boundaries of the classroom more than ever toward increasingly effective learning solutions.

### Why It’s Popular

The growing popularity of flipped classrooms is due to what instructors have always known – that the traditional classroom model has significant limitations:

- Learners must attend live sessions or will miss valuable information. They must grasp the information presented within the time allotted – without the opportunity to replay the information or ask questions.
- They have no access to ready feedback when they need it – which is after class is over when they are applying the information to homework or on the job.
- Instructors must use classroom time to dispense theoretical information, rather than engaging learners in discussion or offering individual coaching and feedback. When the classroom focus is on the lecture, instructors can’t allow learners to move forward at their own pace and still support those who are more challenged, and need to adhere to a set schedule while keeping absentees “caught up” with the rest of the group.

### Technology Is Key

Technological advancements now provide greater flexibility in how content is delivered and applied, making the flipped classroom an attractive approach that allows instructors to focus on engagement, escalate the pace of learning and create stronger learning solutions. While traditional classrooms focus on presenting content, the flipped classroom focuses on applying the content during class where support and feedback are readily available.

	Content Presented	Content Applied	Emphasis Is On
<b>Traditional Classroom</b>	During Class	After Class	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pacing and scheduled class time</li> <li>• The physical classroom</li> </ul>
<b>Flipped Classroom</b>	Before Class	During Class	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The most efficient content delivery method</li> <li>• The target audience and learning outcomes</li> </ul>

The key benefits of flipping the classroom include:

- Because they enjoy increased participation as well as peer support for their classroom, workshop, or lab activities, learners become actively responsible for their own learning.
- Theoretical learning occurs at the learner’s own discretion, pace and location, allowing learners to come prepared to the classroom to apply what they have learned individually.
- Learners can reference instructional assets such as lecture videos and self-paced web-based training (WBT) as needed, both outside and in the classroom.
- Feedback and support for the application of information learned outside of the classroom is available from both the instructor and peers, making the best use of the instructor’s and students’ time and resources.
- By incorporating real world, on-the-job types of activities, flipped classrooms better link new learning directly to actual work performance.



## Deciding if a Flipped Classroom is Appropriate

In a thoughtfully designed curriculum, the most appropriate method of delivery (e.g., instructor-led training (ILT), WBT, self-paced workbook, micro learning or social networks) is selected to achieve the learning objectives, not dictated by the calendar or other logistics. For example, an instructional designer may consider the efficiency of having learners listening to a live instructor's lecture versus recording the lecture and having students review it, or whether the lecture could be videotaped and assigned before class as prework. If the latter is selected, class time becomes available for discussion, questions, application and practice. Making the best use of time and resources supports tailored, customized curriculums that may better translate knowledge into practice with measurable results.

At PMG Learning, we often recommend a combination of online assets, resources, and self-paced learning activities along with peer-driven interactions, facilitated learning and practice with feedback.

A recently revised aeronautical sciences course provides a good example. The theoretical, content-heavy background information was first delivered via WBT courses, then followed by in-person, facilitated workshops where learners actively applied their new knowledge to create real-work products. Learners were encouraged to return to the WBT content to reinforce their knowledge as needed.

## Summary

With technological advances, flipped instructional solutions are a strong alternative to traditional classroom scenarios. They blur the lines of location and time to create a seamless (and often cost-effective) learning experience. A careful and thoughtful consideration of target audiences, training logistics and instructional objectives can help support the development of a successful experience that engages and supports today's learners.