Flipping the Classroom to Promote Critical Thinking
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Proposal submitted to
Faculty Development Committee
Instructional Innovation Grant Proposal
Request for Course Release
Summer 2013

I have reviewed the proposal, and I support the request for a course release for the project.

__________________________________  _______________________
Head of Academic Unit                  Date
Problem Statement

There is growing concern among various stakeholders including scholars, administrators, politicians, employers, students, and communities about the "crisis" in higher education (Carr, 2012). Recent evidence suggests that many undergraduates show little improvement in critical thinking, complex reasoning, and written communication after four years of college. The findings are especially unfavorable for business majors (Arum & Roska, 2011; Korn, 2012; Muff, 2012). Student disengagement, a growing problem in general, appears more prevalent among business majors (Colby, Ehrlich, Sullivan, & Dolle, 2011; Schullery, Reck, & Schullery, 2011). Unfortunately, technology has not been the panacea that many predicted (Carr, 2012; Strain, 1968). The purpose of this proposed study is to take a fresh look at the use of technology in light of the literature related to the “flipped” or inverted classroom. Flipping the classroom has gained popularity in K-12 education but has rarely been studied in higher education. This is not just another online course where the instructor "substitutes" one format for another (Verkroost, Meijernink, Lintsen, & Veen, 2008). It is distinct from blended or hybrid course design. In fact, incorporating new technologies is not essential. Inverting the classroom is about shifting emphasis in the classroom from knowledge acquisition to knowledge application. Students prepare before class and apply what they have learned during class (Lage, Platt, & Treglia, 2000). Of course, posting lectures online or assigning reading is nothing new. What is new is the pedagogical theory that guides how content is offered to the students before class and what classroom activities are performed during class.

Objectives

Based on a review of the literature and data analysis guided by this framework, I expect to fulfill the following objectives:

1. Understand how the inverted classroom may address two criticisms of business education, limited improvement in critical thinking skills and low engagement.
2. Develop learning activities that are appropriate for various curricula, courses, students, and faculty.
3. Experiment with various educational technology from the perspective of someone who is technologically unsophisticated.
4. Create strategies for transitioning to an inverted course.

Method

1. Review literature related to three areas: inverted or flipped classrooms, blended or hybrid course design, and critical thinking.
2. Develop course materials during the 2013 summer semester. I will record my lectures in both sections of MGS 4320 this summer as suggested by Lage et al. (2000). I will develop other supplements including PowerPoint with sound, selected readings such as law review articles and judicial rulings, and examples of student writing assignments. I will create and
evaluate various class activities intended to improve student engagement and higher-order thinking.

3. Collect quantitative and qualitative data during the fall 2013 and spring 2014 semesters comparing two sections of a traditional MGS 4320 CTW course with two redesigned inverted sections of MGS 4320 CTW (Strayer, 2012). Generally, there are 25 students in each section. Course content and key assessments such as online or in class vignettes will be the same for both sections each semester. These "minicases" are based on actual legal findings, but written from the perspective of the management professional rather than an attorney. Vignettes often describe situations that have ambiguous legal implications. To draw reasonable conclusion and write persuasively, student must identify consequential issues, generate alternatives, and anticipate outcomes.

**Evaluation**

1. Present analysis of data assessing student attitudes and performance comparing the two learning environments.

2. Prepare resource packets for faculty that contain guidelines, a bibliography, and examples of activities.

3. Design and conduct a faculty workshop that examines the benefits and challenges of inverting the classroom, describes strategies for transitioning to an inverted course, and suggests resources and techniques for presenting course content that appropriate for various curricula, courses, students, and faculty.

4. Submit a manuscript to a refereed scholarly publication.

**Budget**

I request one course release.

**Media/Classroom Equipment**

No special equipment is necessary to complete this project beyond what is already available.

**References**


