

Flipped Learning Pros and Cons

The effectiveness of the flipped learning model has been evaluated since its rise to popularity with many educators and theorists finding multiple benefits associated with the practice. However, as with most things, there are certain aspects that leave a few people sitting on the fence. We've gone through some of the main benefits of flipped learning as well as areas for concern and disputed them where possible.

Pros

Flipped learning allows students to be in control of their own learning. By giving them the content they need to learn outside of class time, they are free to learn at their own pace without time restrictions. They can revisit the subject matter as many times as they need to and make appropriate notes. Additionally, they can come to class prepared with directed questions to ask their teachers that will help improve their understanding of a topic.



A student-centred classroom helps to create autonomous learners. The ability for students to work under their own direction is something they can easily transfer to university and jobs in later life. A core part of in-class flipped learning are collaborative projects - these tasks, alongside in-class discussions, allow students to learn from one another, but also - to apply the knowledge which they have learnt independently.



Students receive personal and directed feedback. When students have the opportunity to apply new knowledge they've learnt in front of their teachers and peers, more quickly can their teachers step in and provide praise and feedback to further encourage and guide students. By providing live feedback, students are able to instantly apply this and improve their current understanding which will only help further their development.



Parents are provided insight into what their children are studying and the curriculum they are taught. In traditional teaching, parents only get to view students attempting to apply knowledge through homework set, not the knowledge they've been taught. By looking at the intentional content teachers assign students to learn the curriculum, they're fully aware of the information they're being taught. This level of insight means they can actively involve themselves in their child's studies and provide better support at home if needed.



Many have argued that flipped learning is more efficient than traditional learning for both students and teachers. Studying information outside of lessons limits the amount of time spent learning this information and students' workload. For example, if a video takes 20 minutes to watch, the learning is condensed into this time, plus any additional rewinds and note taking, as opposed to an hour lesson in which they have to work to the pace of the average student. This means students have more free time outside of lessons, and the time they spend on new topics is better absorbed.



Cons

For most educators who follow the flipped learning model, the content they give to their students to study outside of lesson time needs to be accessed online. This can cause a digital divide within schools, whereby students who don't have access to internet at home are left at a disadvantage as they're unable to access the learning materials. This argument does surface regularly and isn't just applicable to the flipped learning model. A lot of valuable resources and whole-school software systems require students to have an internet connection in order to access them. This can be solved by schools setting up homework clubs, in which students are able to use school computers and internet access to complete any additional work which requires it.



In order for flipped learning to be successful, teachers are reliant on students completing the work at home, we could argue that this is the same case as with homework, however the key difference is that if students do not partake in their outside-of-class learning, they won't be able to engage with their in-class learning. However, as with all types of teaching and learning, student participation is crucial to it ever being effective, and a benefit of flipped learning would be that because class time is all about applying knowledge learnt, it will become starkly apparent which students are not doing the work outside of class and teachers will be able to intervene much more quickly.



Despite flipped learning helping to make home-learning more efficient for students, it has been disputed that it can in fact add to teachers' workloads. Recording all lessons for year groups and planning new lessons which are centred around the application of knowledge as opposed to retention does and will take time. However, this doesn't have to be a time drain, filming lessons as they happen, sharing the workload between colleagues and filtering the flipped learning approach into your lessons will help to ease the strain of this task.



The majority of the at-home work carried out by students involves a lot of screen time which raises concerns for some as it takes away from face to face interaction which students need to engage in to become well-rounded individuals. Today, the everyday secondary school student will be engaged with technology, as a society we are more open to online applications. By delivering content to students via a medium they're familiar with and enjoy, the content they're absorbing is only going to resonate with them more. Additionally, with more collaborative learning during lesson time, students will get more opportunities to engage with peers via face-to-face interaction.



Pros

Students can revisit the content outside the classroom at their own pace

Autonomous learning is a good skill to prepare students for life

Personal and specific feedback helps to generate fast results

Parents can get a better idea of their child's curriculum

Flipped learning can be more efficient time wise

Cons

Reliant on students having internet access to complete tasks

Students have to ensure they complete all parts of the task and on time

Perception that preplanning and creating the lessons beforehand that it adds to workload

Concern that it limits students face to face interaction

