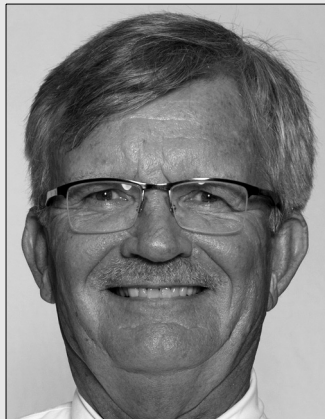


Flipping, Single Concepts, and Video

So Many New Ideas—Or Are They?

Michael Simonson

Flipping a classroom refers to recording a class lecture so students watch and listen at home to free up time in the classroom for discussions. What a popular idea (a silly one, too); teachers have always assigned homework, and then used class time instructor for explanation, review, amplification, and questions.



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Of course some instructors still lecture. And, lecturing is okay, probably more so for traditional teachers than for distance educators. Today, it would be unheard of for a distance teacher to have a 50-minute presentation with little or no student interaction, yet flipped classroom advocates seem to promote recording lectures.

The next old idea with a new level of popularity is the single-concept lesson; this approach, although classic, is a great one. Single-concept teaching is a product of the mastery learning movement of the 1960s and 1970s, and is a technique of teaching that uses the single concept as the building block of instruction. Generally a single-concept lesson is a relatively short 3–5 minute mediated presentation of an idea with a clear introduction, body, and conclusion.

The epitome of the single-concept lesson of the mastery learning generation was the film loop, a 3–4 minute motion picture showing a key idea such as mitosis in biology or the definition of median in statistics. Today, Youtube and Vimeo are loaded with single-concept lessons. When single-concept lessons are part of a series and can be distributed or pushed to interested viewers as a series they are called podcasts.

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