

**Flip the
Classroom
to Prepare
Students for
the Boardroom**

**Imagine
What You
Could Do With
Less Lecture
and More
Interaction**



There are more college graduates than ever before¹ yet those graduates appear to be less prepared for the workforce than their predecessors.

Instead of preparing students for jobs, universities tend to focus on things that matter little once students graduate. For instance, students are asked to sit through lectures for hours and to take multiple-choice tests on the material, but employers don't need that skill.

That's why many college professors are beginning to flip the classroom. This relatively new method of teaching offers educators the ability to teach students skills they actually need via higher quality interactions, the kind of on the fly thinking and give-and-take that are required daily, if not hourly at most corporate jobs.

This white paper explores why traditional teaching in business education does not adequately prepare students for the workforce, how flipping the classroom can help solve that problem, and how professors can easily flip their classroom with the help of technology and new learning solutions.

Students are not prepared for the workforce

Nearly 90 percent of recent college graduates reported that their education prepared them well for the workforce. However, the same study found that half of hiring managers disagreed. When asked how well graduates were prepared in various skills, as many as 60 percent of employers felt that new graduates lacked critical thinking skills and did not pay attention to detail.²

While students are optimistic after graduation, things quickly change once they begin working. Adecco Staffing's Way to Work Generational Survey discovered that 74 percent of participating Millennial and Gen Z respondents felt their colleges and universities did not fully prepare them for the workforce.³

This study, along with many like it, confirms what employers have been saying for years: the skills gap is real.

What's going wrong?

Universities are not adequately preparing students for the workforce, let alone the boardroom. While most college graduates claimed they felt well prepared for their new jobs, only 25 percent felt extremely prepared. That's a significant drop from the 87 percent that said they were well prepared. And when asked if graduates were extremely prepared, a measly 8 percent of hiring managers said yes.⁴



Only 27% of employers think college grads are well-prepared in written communication



Awareness of other cultures outside of the U.S. is the skill most college grads are missing



Recent college grads are not prepared to work with statistics according to 28% of employers

Source: CBS News²

Students are particularly unprepared for the boardroom

Recent college graduates are falling short across the board, but some majors fare worse than others. Business majors scored significantly lower than STEM students in a recent test to assess students' skills in critical thinking, writing and communication, and analytical reasoning.⁵ Given that those skills are imperative for success in the business world, the results are very disheartening to employers.

Disheartening, yes. A surprise? No. A paltry 11 percent of C-level executives strongly agree that recent college graduates have the skills needed for their business.⁶ While employers are doing what they can to make up for the education deficiency of new hires by offering on the job training, that isn't a satisfying solution for the companies or their prospective new hires.

Not Prepared for Class

A study of students at two Midwestern universities⁷ found:

41% completed their assigned readings only when preparing for exams

25% read assigned material prior to attending class

19% did not complete the assigned readings at all

32% believed that they could get an "A" in the class without doing any of the assigned reading

Of those who did the reading:

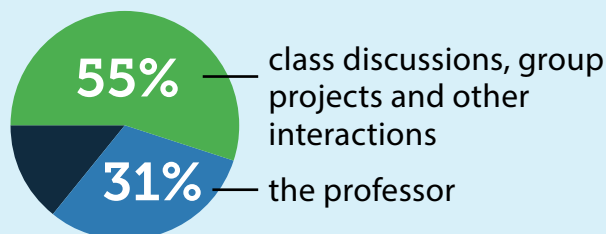
62% spent one hour or less reading

32% spent between 1-2 hours reading

~95% spent less than two hours on assigned reading

Students Want Interaction

Students taking traditional, on-site, face-to-face classes at an established public university⁸ said the number one contributor to a positive class experience was:



Traditional methods aren't working

Traditional teaching methods in universities have been around for centuries. The format is familiar to most people: lectures, homework, and exams. But today's college students grew up in the digital age, and more importantly, they are going to work in workplaces that look drastically different than they did just ten years ago. Communication styles and business models have changed, yet classrooms remain largely the same.

Universities exist to educate students, but in today's workplace that simply isn't enough anymore. Students who take classes that rely on more traditional teaching methods, particularly in business and STEM fields, fall behind students who are offered unique methods of learning.⁹

That's why it's time to flip the classroom

Flipping the classroom essentially means inverting traditional teaching methods. Instead of spending the bulk of class time lecturing, instructors move the lectures out of the classroom, usually into videos available to be viewed online. This allows them to focus on interactive discussions, helping students complete homework or hands-on practical applications of the material during class time.

The concept of the flipped classroom is relatively new

While they aren't the first educators to come up with the idea, Jonathan Bergmann and Aaron Sams of Woodland Park High school are credited with the term flipped classroom. They recorded their lectures and shared them online for students who had missed class, but they realized how effective the video lectures were and began pre-recording all their lectures.

Flipped classrooms are about more than recorded lectures

Instead, flipped classrooms are about a new way of thinking when it comes to learning. Students must understand why they need to watch the recorded lectures — and because they will be tested on the material is not the answer. Both undergrad and graduate business students need to understand how the knowledge will help them in their career and life outside the classroom. They must also be actively engaged in the class time that has been freed up by moving lectures online.

That engagement may look different in every class. Accounting professors will engage students differently than marketing professors, even if both are teaching in flipped classrooms. The important thing is that instructors are able to spend time with their students in more engaging and intellectually stimulating activities that develop true understanding, not just rote memory, and which leave a lasting impression.

Benefits of Flipping

A study of the use of screencasts in traditional courses¹⁰ found significant, positive correlation between the use of videos and overall course grade. Of students surveyed:

- 95%** found the videos useful
- 45%** rated them as one of the best things about the course
- 92%** felt more confident with the course material
- 94%** felt the videos were more effective than the textbook

Flipped classrooms challenge students more than traditional classrooms

Instructors can go more in-depth with the subject material. Because they have more time to work closely with students, the work assigned can be more challenging.

G. Peter Wilson, Ph.D., a professor of accounting at Boston College, believes that students taught in a flipped classroom are pushed harder. "Our belief is that students have to up their game to be competitive in the global economy."¹¹

Considering that a global study found that 90% of employers believe colleges aren't preparing students for the workplace¹², his belief seems to be accurate.



Business students stand to benefit the most from flipped classrooms

Offering students the opportunity to put the knowledge they learn into practice is the key to ensuring college graduates become successful employees. Students need to understand not only the theory but also the practical application of important subjects like accounting, marketing, management, analytics, and finance.

Students can examine real world problems in class

For instance, listening to lectures and reading about accounting teaches students only so much. Flipping the classroom allows professors the chance to dig into practical applications of the accounting by assigning real world problems. Students absorb the recorded lecture and prepare pre-work before class and then work, together or individually, to come up with a solution in class. This teaches students research skills, critical thinking, and communication skills.

Because the work is done in class, the professor is readily available to answer questions and help as needed. As an added bonus, students can work together as peers to review each other's work. This type of activity gives students a chance to see how accounting problems are addressed in the real world and this applies to virtually any area of business education.

Attendance and grades improve in flipped classrooms

Since Markus Ahrens, CPA, CGMA, department chair for Accounting and Legal Studies at St. Louis Community College, began flipping his classroom in 2011, he's seen an increase in attendance and improved grades. "They don't want to sit there and just have to listen. They want to be active."¹¹

Real world results from a flipped classroom

Some institutions bristle at the idea of changing their curriculum, but many are more than willing to shake things up in the interest of helping their students succeed after graduation. That's why Central Michigan University professor Mike Garver flipped his marketing class.

“Teaching is not just passing knowledge like we have been doing for so long. At the college level, it's not just enough to understand the concepts. Students have to be able to do and analyze what they're learning to be valuable to future employers.”

Mike Garver,
Professor, Central Michigan University

He began turning his lectures into podcasts and videos, allowing students to access the information before class. That allowed students

to use their limited class time to practice the market research skills they were learning. His students prepare and deliver presentations for real clients as final projects. Students did so well one semester that the client claimed 75% of the students did a better job than the professional consultant he'd hired and paid \$30,000 for the month before.¹³

Applied learning projects are exactly what employers want

73% of employers think that requiring college students to complete a significant applied learning project would improve their preparation for the workforce.¹⁴ The results of Mr. Garver's students are evidence that these kinds of projects are effective at teaching students skills they need in the business world. Flipped classrooms allow for more time for these types of applied learning projects.



If flipped classrooms are so great, why aren't they the standard?

There are a few reasons instructors and universities as a whole are resistant to the idea of a flipped classroom.

1. It takes time to implement a flipped classroom

Flipped classrooms can require more work than traditional classrooms. Lectures must be pre-recorded, and many instructors find that it takes two or sometimes five times as long to record their lectures as it does to deliver them live. That means what would have been a thirty-minute lecture in the classroom took an hour and a half to record, and some professors insist they don't have that kind of time.

2. It takes money to implement a flipped classroom

This is the complaint many universities have when it comes to flipped classrooms. Yes, it does require a bit of an investment. But with all the technology available, the costs are minimal when compared to the return on the investment. For example, Spartan College reported that overall costs of their program have decreased after implementing flipped classrooms.¹⁵

3. Instructors fear for their jobs

Instructors worry that flipped classrooms mean universities won't need as many professors, as lectures can be prerecorded and supplemental

material used to teach students. But it's the opposite. Professors are more important in flipped classrooms than traditional ones, because they are no longer glorified textbook reading machines. Instead, they are actively engaging with students and facilitating discussion and collaborations.

Hesitant to make the flip?

It doesn't have to be all or nothing.

Professors should keep in mind that flipping the classroom doesn't have to mean getting rid of in-class lectures or textbooks entirely. Some professors have success with only partially flipping their classes.

Partial flipping, also called microflipping, combines the best of both methods. Instructors still lecture in class, but the lectures are much shorter and usually incorporate activities and techniques to keep students engaged. Some professors also find it helpful to turn to supplemental materials to help students learn outside the classroom.



Take advantage of new technology and learning solutions to supplement traditional structure

With the wealth of educational content available online now, professors are able to easily enhance their teachings with additional videos, quizzes, and even games.

Supplemental material and learning solutions allow students to dive deeper into the subject

Professors can only cover so much material a semester, but some students wish they could learn more. Offering supplemental material allows students a deeper look into the subject.

Many accounting students take an auditing course, but that's often the only auditing-focused course offered at their university. An accounting professor can't begin to touch on all the aspects of auditing in a single semester. But with the help of supplemental material, students can learn about audit, internal audit, Sarbanes-Oxley, COSO, and much more.

Supplemental material can offer expert insight into the subject

Because much of the education content available online has been created by current practitioners in their field, it provides a unique look at the subject that some professors simply can't match. These experts can teach students how to look at the subject from a practical viewpoint and give concrete examples from their daily lives.



This practitioner point of view is the perfect complement to the more theoretical education students typically receive in a college classroom. It's an ideal blend of academic and vocational education.

Summary

Jaime S. Fall, a vice president at the HR Policy Association, an organization of chief human resources managers from large employers, eloquently summed up the dilemma universities are facing in a New York Times article. "Colleges can't be either/or anymore — a trade school or a liberal arts college. We need skilled people with well-rounded backgrounds and the ability to think constructively."¹⁶

By implementing flipped classrooms — or even partially flipped classrooms — universities can better prepare their students for success in the workforce. And subsequently, the boardroom.

Introducing Illumeo for Educators™

Illumeo, a leader in professional development and corporate expertise management, is now offering an all-new learning platform for the next generation of business leaders with Illumeo for Educators™.

Illumeo for Educators™ makes flipping the classroom easier than ever

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Illumeo for Educators™ makes learning on the go a reality

Because students can access the video lectures and ancillary educational material from anywhere, they can learn on their terms. That means more prepared students, allowing professors to take a deeper look at the material.

Is Illumeo for Educators™ right for you and your students?

Contact us today and find out how Illumeo for Educators™ can help you flip the classroom and create a better learning environment for everyone.

Footnotes

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About Illumeo

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Based in Silicon Valley, CA, Illumeo serves corporate professionals across Finance, Human Resources, Sales and Marketing. The platform offers competency assessment, hundreds of expert-developed courses, collaborative tools for building and reporting on personalized learning plans, and the ability to self-publish internal courses that promote institutional knowledge.

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