

Where Can I Find Flippable Moments in My Classes?

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Barbi Honeycutt: Welcome to this 20 Minute Mentor. And our question today is focused on Where Can I Find Flippable Moments in My Classes? My name is Barbi Honeycutt, and I'm the founder of Flip It Consulting in Raleigh, North Carolina. I also work at NC State University, where I direct graduate teaching programs, and I serve as an adjunct faculty member in our College of Education. And I'd like for my colleague to introduce herself, because she will be joining me in this video.

Sarah Egan Warren: Hi. My name is Sarah Egan Warren, and I'm a Flip It Associate. I'm also the Education and Training Director for Reify Media, and I work as the Assistant Director of the Professional Writing Program at NC State University.

So I want to go for our learning outcomes for today, because that's where we always start, right? Our learning outcomes.

Barbi Honeycutt: Always.

Sarah Egan Warren: So our first one is to describe what it means to flip. The second thing you should be able to do by the time you finish watching this 20 Minute Mentor is to define the term "flippable moment". And the third thing you should be able to do is to identify three places to look for flippable moments.

Barbi Honeycutt: Excellent. So I think, Sarah, it's important first when we get started to make sure that we explain to our audience that you don't have to flip everything. And I can't tell you how many faculty I've talked to-- and you've probably run into the same thing-- where we travel around and we talk to faculty, and they seem really frustrated and overwhelmed, and burned out about this whole thing called flipping. And what I've noticed is it's because they've tried to record a video of every single lecture for every single class for the entire semester. Have you seen this?

Sarah Egan Warren: Absolutely. And in fact, that's a problem that I had with one of my TAs just recently. He was really interested in this idea of flipping the classroom and went about recording a video for every single class period. And by mid semester, he was burned out and so were the students.

Barbi Honeycutt: I bet. I bet. It's just way too much. And that's one of the things we want to say is trying to flip everything is so overwhelming. It really leads to burnout. And it's not just burnout for you. You think about all the different roles that we have as faculty members on campus. We're serving on committees. We're trying to get research grants.

Sarah Egan Warren: Doing observations.

Barbi Honeycutt: Yes. And not to mention our own course prep and planning and supervising TAs. I mean, that's part of the job you have at NC State is supervising TAs. When you're trying to think about flipping everything, it's just too much. And it does lead to burnout for you. But Sarah, it does lead to burnout for students. Do you want to talk a little bit about that?

Sarah Egan Warren: Absolutely. It can be overwhelming to have to do the exact same thing over and over and over again for an entire semester. So in the case of my TA, these students were expected to watch these videos that were running pretty long, more than a half an hour.

Barbi Honeycutt: Oh my goodness.

Sarah Egan Warren: And watch those every single time before coming to class, and then coming into class and doing something with it. And because it was repetitive and over and over again, it really lost its effectiveness.

Barbi Honeycutt: Right. And I think that's an important message, is it loses its effectiveness for the students as a learning strategy, and also you can just get so burned out that you forget about your passion as a teacher, why you're there, and what your goals are. So a solution to this might be to flip a moment.

Sarah Egan Warren: Right. Instead of the whole class, just flip a piece of it, or just flip a lesson, or just flip one day a week. You don't have to flip the entire semester.

Barbi Honeycutt: Excellent. I love the idea of flipping one day a week. Maybe start early in the end of semester, and then you might flip it every Friday, for example.

Sarah Egan Warren: Nice. Flip it Friday.

Barbi Honeycutt: Flip it Friday. That might work really well. So there's a lot of things you can do. And you're really focusing on the moment. But I think it's important, Sarah, we should probably define for our audience what the flip is.

Sarah Egan Warren: Right. We keep saying flip, flip. What does that exactly mean?

Barbi Honeycutt: Right. And you probably have heard a lot of definitions of the flip. It might be that students do watch these videos. And that seems to be the common definition. Watch videos before you come to class, and then you do things in class together like-- What kinds of things have students done in your classes?

Sarah Egan Warren: Sometimes they've had a discussion, or we've asked them to come in and share their opinion about a video that they've watched, or even watch a video and prepare a document to share during peer review.

Barbi Honeycutt: Great idea. Great idea. So all of those are strategies for flipping. And what we want to do here is convey to you, our audience, that flipping is really more than just watch the videos, record those lectures. Flipping can be more than that.

And in our work, we tend to hold the flip up against the motto of Bloom's Taxonomy. And so if you take a look here you can see that in class, in a traditional lecture class, you can see the student's role here is to remember and understand information. You're the one delivering the content, and when you develop a lecture that's kind of what you're thinking. What am I going to say?

And your students' role there is to really just to listen. Maybe they take some notes. And then when students go out of class, that's what they do the heavy lifting, I call it. Where they're analyzing, evaluating. And your students are writing papers often. Right?

Sarah Egan Warren: Yes. So in the flipped class, that's the opposite. Right? In a flipped class, that understanding and remembering happens outside of the classroom. And those things either can be in the form a video or reading an article or working with flash cards or a game of some sort, so that you're dealing with those lower levels of Bloom's Taxonomy.

Barbi Honeycutt: And then when you're in class, when you're there with them able to work with them, that's where you're creating, evaluating, and analyzing with them.

Barbi Honeycutt: Yes. That's the part I love.

Sarah Egan Warren: It's really exciting.

Barbi Honeycutt: Yes. That's why I get up and go to class every day with my students. I want to be in that space with them, where they are analyzing possibilities. It's not always about just memorizing the right answer.

Sarah Egan Warren: And it's neat to be there with them during that creating and evaluating, because there's where you're the guide on the side. And where you can watch what's happening and kind of direct them down the right.

Barbi Honeycutt: I agree. And that's really what it's all about. And so we wrap this around an acronym for F-L-I-P, the FLIP. Which means to Focus on your Learners by Involving them in a Process. And the key here is involving in those higher level learning outcomes, not just involving them in the things that they could do on their own outside of class. And I think that's what you were explaining, is being able to have discussions with students, being able to work with them, and quickly identify things that they might be confused about or misinterpreting.

Sarah Egan Warren: It's easier to stop them when they're doing something wrong right there and get them back on track than it is if they've done the work outside of class, then they turn it and we're marking them off there, where maybe they've missed the point.

Barbi Honeycutt: Right. And another great thing about this is you can have assessment in the moment. So when we're thinking about assessment and evaluating students, often if we don't assess until the mid semester, or even at the end of the semester, we might have lost them on week two. And so if we can quickly go in and correct any misinformation in that moment, we can probably change the way that they're interpreting our material and maybe make a stronger connection with what they're doing.

Sarah Egan Warren: Absolutely.

Barbi Honeycutt: Excellent.

Sarah Egan Warren: So what exactly is a flippable moment? We've talked about how it's not a good idea to flip everything. We want you to think about flipping just a moment. So let's talk about four definitions of flippable moments.

So a flippable moment is the moment during class when you stop talking at your students and flip the work to them instead.

Barbi Honeycutt: I love that. That's so simple. It doesn't bring in the strategies yet. It's just the core essence of what it means to flip. It's when I quit talking at you and you're going to do something. I love that definition. It connects a little bit to get to the second definition, which is this is the moment where you allow your students to really struggle.

And that's such a hard place to be, when they're struggling. You want to jump in with the answer. You allow them to ask questions. They're solving the problems. And as I said before, they're doing that heavy lifting required to learn the material. I mean, that's how we learn. It's not always with having someone talking at us, but it's when we're the ones wrestling with the problems.

And I want to jump there to watching our students struggle. It's so hard. And like you say, it's hard to be quiet when they're working. But that's part of the process. It's part of the process.

Sarah Egan Warren: It's part of the process. The moment when your students need your structure and guidance, but not your answers. So this is that shift from sage on the stage to guide on the side. That you just are providing the structure for the class for them to do the work. But you're there to help them along the way. It doesn't mean you're not part of class. Right?

Barbi Honeycutt: Absolutely. You have to be part of class. And we talk a lot about it in previous videos, if you'd like to go there and watch those about being actively passive in your classroom. And so I really like what you're saying here about providing the structure of the classroom. That is so important, because you don't want a classroom, a flipped class, to be a place of chaos.

Sarah Egan Warren: It's not a free-for-all.

Barbi Honeycutt: Right. It can't be just chaos. They have to have your guidance. And I find this as challenging for faculty to play that guide on the side, because you're the expert in the classroom. We're the experts. We know a lot of answers for questions. We don't know them all. But we certainly do know the questions the students ask. And it's so easy for us to want to jump in and tell them our answers. But that is that moment, when you see yourself doing that, that's a flippable moment. Step back and let your students do this on their own.

So the last definition that we have is the moments when students need to make meaning for themselves. And this is really whether internalizing the information in your class and the content, and they're really structuring their own mental models of what it means to learn your material and become an expert in their own right in your field.

And so this is another moment when you can pay attention and say, you know what, this is something that's critical that my students absolutely need to know. And they need to learn it in a way that matters to them. And that's a great place to flip.

Sarah Egan Warren: It also makes them take ownership of a course.

Barbi Honeycutt: Love that. Absolutely.

Sarah Egan Warren: They have a new responsibility to be a participant in class.

Barbi Hnoeycutt: Excellent. Love it. So where can you find these flippable moments? We keep talking about them. We're kind of defining them. But let's talk about three places where you can actually see the flippable moment.

So the first place will be look for confusion in your classes. And the best I can give you an example-- and I think you have an example to share too-- about looking for confusion.

At NC State University one of the hats that I wear is I teach all of our TAs, our teaching assistants, how to teach. And one of the things that they get most confused about is Bloom's Taxonomy, what was featured earlier in this video. They get so confused because, well, some of our science students in biology don't even understand the term taxonomy. For them, that's something totally different than this triangle on this pyramid that we've shown you.

And also, just the idea of thinking about the learning outcomes and what those are and how you shape them and how understanding is a very difficult thing to see. It's not even really a good learning outcome. And so when we talk about confusion, for them when I teach Bloom's Taxonomy, or, let me flip that question, when I have them learning Bloom's Taxonomy, I actually created game around Bloom's Taxonomy. And I've creative memorization exercises. I've also had them each one take a piece of the level of Bloom, and we figure out what order they need to be in and have that physical movement happening.

So it's been great to have them really see that the confusion that lies with Bloom's Taxonomy I was able to flip, and they're able to now understand it even more at a higher level. And they're actually creating Blooms on their own and filling in worksheets of the different levels. So that's just one example. And Sarah, I know you had an example to share.

Sarah Egan Warren: Yeah. so the TA I mentioned before who had slept almost the entire semester, it all started with weather, actually. We had a pretty rough winter where were too, and we missed a lot of days of school. And so this student was trying to find a way to make up some of the time lost, because students were getting confused, because they were trying to rush through things during that precious class time that they had. And so he decided that he was going to start making these videos and try out this flipped classroom. And he just went gung ho with it.

Started out as a great idea, because it was very helpful to have the students have the opportunity to watch the video, to get caught up on the content that they had missed because of the closures due to weather, and so that

was a really good idea to start with, finding that moment of confusion because they had rushed through content.

Barbi Honeycutt: Right. And I see that a lot, actually. And it seems like more and more faculty see that as a benefit of the flipped classroom. But we have to think about it in balance, because we don't want to do too much and cause even more confusion.

So a second place to look is for the fundamentals in a class. So if you're looking at your fundamentals, these are the things that your students absolutely, positively must know before they move on to maybe the next chapter or the next course in a series of courses in your curriculum.

And for me, I'll just share an example before you share your example, Sarah, I used to teach an introductory course in recreation and tourism management. And this was a theory course. So lots of theory. Students are really learning about what the field is all about. And so the fundamentals were there. I needed them to know the theory, and I needed them to know how to apply it and to learn what our field was all about in the first place. So I actually-- Sarah, you'll love this-- I created a game.

Sarah Egan Warren: Of course you did, Barbi.

Barbi Honeycutt: Of course, I did. I created a game based on Monopoly, actually. I called it Leisure-opoly. And that may sound a little weird. But what I did is it started as a two-day game to review for the final exam. But it turned into, by the second semester, I ended up playing it-- you talked about Flip It Fridays-- we played it every Friday. And the students loved it. And it was a great way for them to quickly apply what we had learned on the Monday and Wednesday class into a game environment. And they were learning those fundamentals. Great way to flip. How about you? Tell me an example.

Sarah Egan Warren: Back to my TA example again. One of the interesting things as I got my TA to move away from recording these long videos for every single day of class was having him look for existing videos that already discussed the fundamentals.

Excellent idea.

Instead of reinventing the wheel, he was able to curate that content and pull together some really excellent resources for the students that they were able to dig in on those fundamental theories and strategies and things that they could use right away.

Barbi Honeycutt: I love it. I love it. It's a great way to do that. So let's talk about the third place. And I think we'll both appreciate this one. Look for boredom in your class. And I don't just mean boredom from your students, although that's certainly a place to look. If your students are bored---

Sarah Egan Warren: Boredom for yourself.

Barbi Honeycutt: Yes, if your students are bored. The other place to look here is boredom for you. So Sarah, we've been teaching a while. We've been teaching for a while. And I certainly have those moments where I just get really bored with the content. Have you experienced this as well?

Sarah Egan Warren: Never!

Barbi Honeycutt: So that would be a great place to flip your approach. And let me just share my most recent example. So as I said, one of the roles I have at NC State University is to teach our TAs how to teach. And so one of the things that they have to do is create a teaching philosophy. And this is a really challenging document for them to do.

And I used to travel around. I would go to every one of our colleges in the university. Can you believe this? Every college. And I would deliver this lecture, this workshop, on how to write a teaching philosophy. And then I would send the students away, and they would go write their philosophies, and I wouldn't really ever see them again, unless they just happened to bring them to me. And so I said, you know what, this is the perfect place to flip. I am bored. I have traveled around. I am saying the same stuff over and over again to these students, and it's time to mix it up a little bit.

So what I did was I did record a series of four videos. And each one of them broke down each piece of the teaching philosophy so that students could practice writing it. And then they brought it to me during our workshop. And I was able to coach them, give them advice. We did peer review. Beautiful. Changed everything. I will never go back. I was bored with the content, and I flipped the whole approach, and it was just great. So can you tell me about an example that you can share?

Sarah Egan Warren: Well, you know I teach technical and professional writing, and so part of that is grammar.

Barbi Honeycutt: Grammar.

Sarah Egan Warren: You can imagine that many people feel instantly like those poor students in this picture. I think that it's actually maybe not boredom as much as

resistance or worry or nervousness or anxiety about it. But it often comes across as boredom, because they check out.

Now, the fun thing about grammar-- only an English teacher would such a thing as that-- is that there are lots of resources that approach grammar in a humorous way. And they are really great to kind of get students to think about grammar in not such a "you must do this."

Barbi Honeycutt: Right. Lots of rules. I wish you'd have been my English teacher.

Sarah Egan Warren: So I can send them to website or resources that they can read or watch, and that can sometimes be helpful.

Barbi Honeycutt: That's great. So those are three great places to look for those flippable moments. So you see a flippable moment. What do you do? What can you do when you see flippable moment? And well, Sarah, there's so many things we could share.

Let's brainstorm for a minute. One of the things that I like to do when I a flippable moment-- I just shared-- I love to play a game. Love to create games. I've done everything from Jeopardy to simulation games. We did that Monopoly game. Have you ever played many games in your field?

Sarah Egan Warren: I don't like games as much as you do.

Barbi Honeycutt: OK. So what do you do then? Because you certainly don't have to do that.

Sarah Egan Warren: That's right. So I tend to like videos a lot, which I know is not your favorite. So see? Games, video, games, video. I use a lot of case studies, where students can kind of dig and sort of feel like it's a real situation and try and work through that. Sometimes I'll assign them different roles. Sometimes I ask them to pick the roles themselves.

But most of my students are working outside of their classes, as well. So they can bring in that outside experience. But for those who have not had a "real job" in their field, a case anything fills in those gaps. So that's a great way to address a flippable moment.

Barbi Honeycutt: I like that. And the other thing with case studies is it pushes them to the top of Bloom's pyramid.

Sarah Egan Warren: Absolutely.

Barbi Honeycutt: They have to do the analysis and the synthesis. They're comparing. They're contrasting. You can't go into a case study and just define something.

Sarah Egan Warren: Correct.

Barbi Honeycutt: So you have to take it a step further. I'll say another place. Let me share this with you. I don't know if I've ever shared this with you before. But you don't have to change your whole approach. You can still lecture in a flipped classroom. But I call it a modified lecture, or what I call a structured flip.

I don't know if I've ever shared that term with you before. But a structured flip is one where you can lecture for 10 minutes if you need, but then flip it to your students and give them something to do. We both like think-pair-share. You want to tell our audience what think-pair-share is?

Sarah Egan Warren: Think-pair-share is where you give a topic or a writing prompt or a thought, and you ask the students to take a few moments, not very long, two minutes, where they should think about it. Then they pair up with someone sitting next to them in class, or even have them move to sit next to someone they've never sat next to before. And then they talk about it, and then you can call on the different pairs to share out with the whole group.

Barbi Honeycutt: I love it.

Sarah Egan Warren: I also like write-pair-share.

Barbi Honeycutt: Oh, write-pair-share. Yes. Share that one.

Sarah Egan Warren: That gives people a little more time to pull their thoughts together, especially our introverted learners, who maybe want to have some time to put thoughts down on paper before they have to go and meet a stranger and talk to someone and share their ideas. So sometimes that write-pair-share, where the writing is in the beginning, it gives them an opportunity to think through their ideas first.

Barbi Honeycutt: I love that. And I'm always one who likes to formulate my ideas before I raise my hand even. So that gives me a great chance to really think and reflect for a little while.

Sarah Egan Warren: I also like the gallery walk.

Barbi Honeycutt: Oh, the gallery walk is a fabulous idea. Do you want me to talk about that one?

Sarah Egan Warren: Sure.

Barbi Honeycutt: The gallery walk, you can simply take sheets of flip chart paper. You post them around the room. And on each sheet of flip chart paper, you write a question or a prompt or put a statistic on there. And you divide your students into groups. And then your students will go to each of the different questions around the room and they take a marker and they write whatever their answer is to that question.

And the cool thing here, Sarah, is that I would get every single group of students a different color marker. So have like a green color marker and a red and purple and a blue. And as they go around and they listed their different ideas or responses to question, you can tell which group responded to the question and how. And then all the students in other groups can see how the questions are evolving and changing.

So those are just fabulous ideas, great ways for us to think about how you might flip a moment. You don't have to go full scale and flip your whole class. You can flip these moments. You can do a structured flip, where you're still lecturing, but you're integrating those moments into what you already do.

So this has been fabulous. It has been so great to share this time with you. It's great to talk about all of these different ways that can flip your class and the flippable moments that we want to find.

And so I want to encourage you to go out there and share other strategies with us and connect with us. We've actually written a couple of books on 101 ways to flip your class. So if you're looking for more strategies, when you find those flippable moments, that's a great thing to go in and just flip through the book, pun intended! Flip through the book, and then go ahead and grab a strategy and give it a try.

Sarah Egan Warren: So before we wrap up, we want to encourage you to please go to SurveyMonkey and fill out this survey for us, which is our evaluation form. And we thank you for your time.

Barbi Honeycutt: Thank you.