Flipped learning
Blending teacher-led sessions with independent learning

Flipped learning reverses the traditional classroom approach to teaching and learning. At home, students watch videos, listen to audio recordings, read books or worksheets. These resources allow them to work at their own pace, pausing to make notes where necessary. Some students, though not all, will be able to access help and support from family members. This independent study means there is time in live sessions with the teacher for activities that encourage students to think critically about the information they have studied. Live sessions become a time to explore subjects with the support of teacher and classmates.

The flipped learning approach has two parts: direct instruction at home and an interactive element with a live link to the teacher. The direct instruction can focus on readings or audio recordings, but it often consists of videos. These may be ones made by the teacher, or they could be ones that have been shared online. A useful source is the Khan Academy, a not-for-profit organisation that specialises in making short explanatory videos that are freely available online: khanacademy.org/.

The success of flipped learning depends on how the live session is run. Some teachers have adopted peer mentoring, with students teaching each other. Others have used group projects to explore the concepts learned at home. In some cases, the live sessions are used for debate and discussion.

Set up a framework where all learning resources are available to students.

Put learning in the right place.

Teach students to learn independently.

Build in time for students to reflect on their assumptions.

The choice will partly depend on the subject matter and partly on how the link is being made. If students are unable to join live video chat, they may need to interact via text chat, a shared document, or phone conversations.

If students have limited Internet access and cannot all be online at the same time, live sessions can be spread during office hours. These may be times when teachers will be available on video chat, or a discussion forum, or via text to work one-to-one or in small groups with students. These office hours can be drop-in sessions or may be scheduled around times when both student and teacher are able to get online, talk on the phone, or communicate via text message.

How did it go?
Let us know in the comments on www.open.ac.uk/blogs/innovating how flipped learning worked for you and your students. Please share any tips that others would find useful, or link to examples of good resources.