

**Key Concepts:** *Flipped and Blended Defined*  
**Key Terminology:** *Flipped, Blended, Online, Traditional, Hybrid*

**Key Idea:** *Introduction to Flipped and Blended Learning*



## CHAPTER 1

### WHAT IS FLIPPED & BLENDED LEARNING?

First things first...thanks for reading! If you've picked up this book, then you clearly care about your teaching and want the best for your students, and we're right there with you. No matter how much we wish, hope and look forward to having the perfect course filled with the perfect students, the stars never seem to align. Have you ever noticed that anytime college instructors get together to compare notes, the conversation inevitably circles around to faculty pet peeves and the students who commit them?

Here are several of the most common:

- Failing to come to class regularly;
- Arriving to class late (and especially making a big entrance), and worse, making a habit of it;
- Shuffling papers, putting books away, and other “end-of-class” behaviors before the class has ended;
- Questioning whether some of the homework for the class is just “busy work”;
- Asking if “we’re doing anything important in class”;
- Asking what is happening in class when that information is in the syllabus;
- Allowing cell phones to ring in class;

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- Texting in class;
- Holding a side discussion during class;
- Asking inane or off-topic questions;
- Eating in class;
- Claiming not to know an assignment was due, that there was a test, or any other class work that is clearly identified in the class calendar;
- Not completing the assigned reading before class;
- Sleeping during class;
- Complaining about the workload in class;
- Wearing inappropriate clothing (or the lack of it) to class;
- Asking to “borrow” a stapler to staple a homework assignment for the class;
- Turning in assignments that do not follow the assignment;
- Making excuses for missed exams, class assignments (Hansen, “College Professor Pet Peeves”).

What would you say if we said you could avoid most of these by embarking on the journey into flipped and blended learning? Seem to good to be true? Well, it’s not.

Randall Hansen, in his article “College Professor Pet Peeves and Positive Student Behaviors,” not only gives us a list of pet peeves, but he also identifies positive behaviors that are common to students in flipped and blended learning environments. How would you like to see more of these behaviors from your students?

- Students take responsibility for their education;
- Students have read the assigned reading and actively participate in class discussion;
- Students complete all assigned work on time;
- Students sit toward the front of the classroom;

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- Students visit professors during office hours;
- Students do not make excuses;
- Students ask for help more than a day before a test or an assignment due date.

Flipped and blended learning turns the traditional lecture classroom on its head and allows you to combine your own creativity with technological tools that help you use your classroom time more effectively and efficiently. As a result, your students are engaged, prepared, and often more excited about learning the course materials you are eager to provide and the teaching you are excited to do.

Before we dive into how to flip and blend your own courses, let's take a moment to understand flipped and blended learning and how it fits into the course platform options available to you when you're planning your courses.

If you could teach your course in such a way so as to actively engage every student, what would your course look like? What kinds of activities would you do in class, and what would you have the students do at home? How much technology would you introduce, if any? How would you be sure to cover all of the course materials by the end of the semester so that your students had opportunities to learn, practice and demonstrate critical thinking, analysis, and application skills?

Would a lecture-based course be able to accomplish all of those desired outcomes? Not really.



That's not to say that the lecture is outmoded or useless. On the contrary, lectures plays an important role in blended and flipped courses. The catch is that the lecture in a blended and flipped course is not delivered in the classroom, but rather out of class, where the student works independently. This flipping of the lecture means classroom time is available for active learning activities that lead to deeper student engagement.

**A**s an instructor at a community college, I constantly strive to engage my students in the classroom environment. This can be a challenge at any academic level, but at the community college level it is particularly challenging considering the varied ages of our student population. For my students and I, flipping the classroom allows for the classroom to come alive with engagement and brings together a sense of community and connection

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within the classroom like no other course platform I have ever used. A flipped

classroom challenges students to be prepared for the lesson of the day and to work collaboratively and independently to communicate the information that traditionally would have been delivered via in-class lecture.

Flipping a classroom is a way to connect the multi-generational community college classroom with the course materials required for reading. This teaching method builds connections in a classroom and, in my experience, students adapt to this non-traditional teaching format very well. The flipped classroom is a way to foster confidence in both faculty and students, and bring a classroom alive through increased student engagement and interactivity.— *Don King, General Education Instructor, Pitt Community College, North Carolina*

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We're going to be using specialized terms such as "blended," "hybrid," "traditional," "online," "virtual," "pedagogy" and "flipped" that may be a bit confusing to the uninitiated. If your degree is in adult education or you have a previous background in education, these terms may be familiar to you. However, most college instructors are hired because they are content experts. If this is the case with you, you may not have a working knowledge of these ideas. Don't worry. With a bit of effort, you'll be fluent in the necessary terminology in just a few minutes.

First, let's address one of the most commonly confused set of concepts first...course structure vs. pedagogy.

<i>Structure</i>	<i>Pedagogy</i>
Where (is the course taught)?	How (is the course taught)?
Classroom vs. hybrid/blended vs. internet	Lecture vs. flipped vs. active

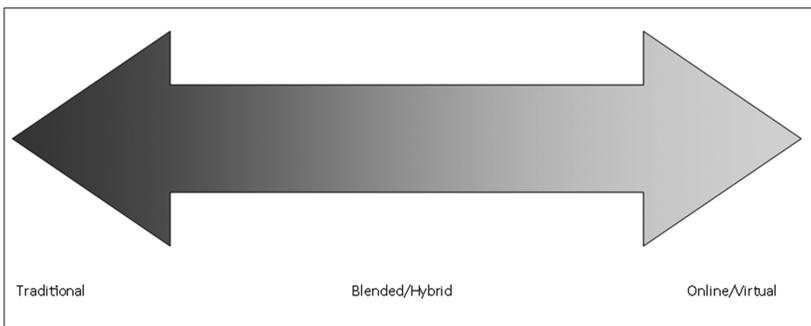


Figure 1.1: Continuum of the Structure of the Classroom

The majority of courses taught at colleges and universities today are structured in one of three ways: in a traditional classroom, online, using some combination of both.

There are several factors to consider when deciding how to structure your course; some of those may be determined in whole or part by the needs of your department or college. For example, there may be limited classroom space or a desire to offer a variety

of course structures. It's important to understand the differences between the types of course structures before we move on.

### Course Structures

#### **Traditional Courses**

In the traditional classroom structure, both the students and the instructor gather in a classroom for all of the contact hours of the course. It is a true, physical, face-to-face meeting. This course structure has, historically, been the most common structure of classes offered on college campuses. One of the main benefits of this course structure is, obviously, the contact and interaction between student and instructor. Instructors directly monitor student progress and struggles. The face-to-face traditional classroom course structure also allows intellectual exchange among the students and between the student and instructor, interactions that are more difficult to facilitate in online (virtual) learning environments. However, a student in a traditional classroom needs to have the time available to attend class meetings regularly, and must commit to scheduling other obligations, such as work and family, around the class meetings. This can prove to be difficult for some students, particularly those who are non-traditional students with family obligations and full or part-time jobs—a student demographic which is growing.

The development and expansion of educational technology have created many alternatives for course instruction that do not rely on the traditional classroom model. The popularity of online and hybrid courses has increased in over the past decade. Most colleges have adopted a learning management system, or LMS, to provide students and instructors with a place to share instructional information online. Common LMS options chosen by colleges and universities include Moodle, Blackboard, and Canvas. With the adoption of LMS technology, greater varieties of course structure options have become available to institutions (and instructors) to meet the needs of their diverse student populations.

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### **Virtual Courses**

One of those options is a fully online or virtual course. With online courses, all of the work is done without a required face-to-face meeting between the instructor and the student. There may be some synchronous (scheduled) meetings through formats such as Skype, webinar or video chat platforms, but the majority of students' work is completed asynchronously to provide flexibility to the student. Flexibility is a powerful benefit of this course structure, as is independence in learning. However, both the students and the instructor need a certain level of digital competency in order to effectively use this type of course structure. Students also need to be skilled in time management, and adept at self-motivation. Research shows that time management skills may be a more powerful predictor of a college freshman's GPA than SAT scores (Britton & Tesser, 1991; Thibodeaux, Deutsch, Kitsantas, & Winsler, 2016). Further, Thibodeaux et. al., 2016 found that students were more likely to lower their target GPA than increase their target study time goals when faced with a lower GPA than expected after their first semester of college. The issue of time management and self-motivation is even more critical in an online course than in a face-to-face setting.

### **Hybrid Courses**

The final course structure blends both traditional classroom and online learning. Appropriately called blended or hybrid learning, it employs some combination of classroom meetings and online coursework. The percentage of time spent in the classroom versus online can vary widely. For example, one hybrid course may meet in person only for exams and practical assessments while another may meet 60-75 percent of the course contact hours in person. If envisioning course structure as a continuum with online at one extreme and traditional at the other, blended and hybrid learning encompasses everything between the extremes, and offers considerable flexibility in course structure. Just as with online courses, the student and the instructor need to have a certain level of digital proficiency in order to successfully take advantage of this type of classroom setting. However, this course structure allows the students and teacher to work together face-to-face in addition to the online requirements.

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Which is the most effective course structure? There are certainly arguments for each of them, and challenges associated with each as well. Since you may not have a choice in your course structure, it's in the pedagogy that you will make the most of the structure that you have been given. Ideally, if you want to flip your course, you will make use of either a traditional or hybrid/blended course structure since the nature of the flipped course involves both face-to-face and out-of-class work to be completed by the student. However, a blended structure is optimal for a flipped classroom environment. Why? To understand we need to explain the differences between the pedagogical models.

### **Pedagogy**

If traditional, blended and online are the structure options for courses, the options for how the course is taught would be called the pedagogy. The broad categories to be considered are these: lecture, active learning, and flipped.

#### **Lecture**

Who hasn't been on the receiving end of a lecture either in or outside of a classroom? The practice in the medieval university was for the instructor to read from an original source to a class of students who took notes on the lecture. Over the past 200 years, the diffusion of knowledge via handwritten lecture notes has been an essential element of academic life (Bligh, 2000). The lecture-based classroom pedagogy is familiar: during a lecture, information flows one way, from the instructor to the students. Students are expected to receive this information, take notes, and memorize. Students may be asked to apply the information learned, but that is usually done through projects and assignments completed outside of class meetings.

Lecture-based classrooms are led by the instructor who decides what is learned and when it is learned. A persistent criticism of lecture-based teaching and learning surrounds the passive nature of that pedagogical method. Numerous studies have concluded that lecturing is as effective, but not more effective, than any other