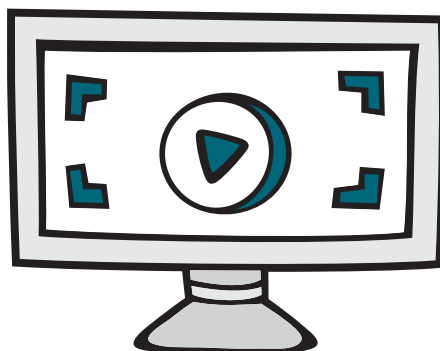


CHAPTER 5



Flip Learning With Videos

“Video instruction makes me feel like I’ve been able to clone myself.”

—Kate Gaskill

A partnership model demands that the teacher and the learner have time to meet regularly in class and conference about their goals, which will be discussed in Chapter 6, or conduct side-by-side assessments or grade interviews, which we will discuss in Chapters 9 and 11. However, teachers who rely exclusively on whole-group, teacher-led instruction may still spend large chunks of class time presenting information at the front of the room. Using video can allow teachers to spend less time talking at students and spend more time working with them.

In training sessions, when I talk about dedicating a class period to conferencing with individual students or conducting side-by-side assessments, I always have a teacher who asks, “What does the rest of the class do while

you are meeting with students?” My response is simple, “They are working.” This response is often met with looks of incredulity. Many teachers seem convinced that students are not capable of or willing to do their work if the teacher is not providing instruction and monitoring their progress. This perception of students concerns me. I believe the goal of school should be to teach students how to learn on their own. The teacher is there to guide the experience, but the goal must be a gradual release of responsibility for the learning to students. If teachers hold their students’ hands through every part of the learning process, I worry that students will not develop the ability to self-regulate, think critically, problem solve, and collaborate productively with their peers.

THE BENEFITS OF USING VIDEOS WITH STUDENTS

For the first 7 years of my teaching career, I spent a significant amount of time at the front of the room explaining directions, providing instruction, and repeating information. Incorporating video in my classroom totally changed my practice. If I am planning to repeat the same information the same way for multiple groups of students, I record that explanation. I want students to have the luxury of controlling the pace at which they consume the information. In real-time whole-group lectures or mini-lessons, students have one chance to access and take notes on the information, and the pacing is dictated by the teacher. That means if a student is absent, tired, or daydreaming, he or she may not get the information he or she needs to be successful. However, if a teacher records that explanation, then students who are absent or kids who are having an off day can access that video content online any time.

To be clear, I view this as a strategy for providing a baseline of information. A single video on a topic will not be enough instruction for the majority of students, but it does provide a foundation on which to build. Once students have watched a video, I can provide small-group instruction and customize the follow-up instruction, scaffolds, and practice for groups of students at different levels.

Video has several benefits over a live explanation.

1. Students control the pace at which they consume video content. They can pause, rewind, or rewatch a video.
2. Students can access the videos anytime online if teachers create playlists on YouTube, share a Google Drive folder with video content, or make videos available on their learning management systems. If a student needs to hear an explanation five times, they can do that without the teacher needing to repeat himself or herself.

3. If a student transfers into a class and has missed important instruction, they can access that instruction online by watching the videos.
4. If parents are attempting to support their students at home, they can also rely on teacher-created or -curated videos to more effectively help their students.

Almost all of my first instruction is via video. Students watch a video, take notes, and engage with the information. Then I provide additional instruction, explanations, examples, models, and scaffolds for students who need more than the video explanation. Despite my enthusiasm for the potential of using videos with students, I know that video is only valuable if teachers design learning experiences that thoughtfully weave video content into the lesson.

Jacquelyn Langdon
6th Grade Language Arts and Social Studies Teacher
Raymond Cree Middle School
Palm Springs Unified School District

Incorporating technology into my instruction has always been a focus of mine. Over the course of my 15 years of teaching, technology has changed significantly, and the impact I have seen on student learning is amazing.

Each year I am faced with the challenge of meeting the needs of diverse learners, not only in style but also ability. Differentiating instruction is a must, providing scaffolds, offering opportunities for enrichment, and challenging students to think on a deeper level. In reflecting, I would often ask myself: How will I accomplish this? What will the other students be doing? Do I really have enough time to work with each student? Finally, after working with Catlin Tucker, I realized that creating videos was the answer to all of my questions, and I had a solution to my biggest obstacle, time.

Through video, I provide direct instruction for new content, re-teaching, how-to instructions for projects, and the list continues. Videos give me time—time to conference with students individually, time to reteach in small groups, time to hear my students' discussions and ideas, time to really meet the needs of my students. Additionally, videos give students time—time to learn at their own pace, time to review the instruction, time to pause, think, and process information.

Sure, creating a video takes some time, but with technology and new apps, making a screencast or video is so much easier than it used to be. Plus, the time I gain is so much more valuable than the time it takes to make a video; the benefits definitely outweigh the cost.

VIDEO IS VERSATILE

There are myriad ways an educator can use video with students. There is the classic Flipped Classroom Model, that shifts the transfer of information online so students can control the time, place, and pace of their learning. Then class time can be spent applying that new information in an environment where students have access to a subject area expert and a community of peers with whom they can work. This use of video to provide virtual lectures was made popular by Sal Khan and the Khan Academy. However, there has been push-back against sending videos home with students because teachers worry about their students' access to technology and the Internet outside of class. As a result, many teachers have embraced the "in-class flip," where students watch videos in the classroom as opposed to taking them home and viewing them for homework. Even though students lose control over the time and place when they watch videos in class, they can still control the pace of their learning as they watch videos. I would argue that controlling the pace of learning is probably the biggest benefit of the flipped model. As long as educators build a buffer of time around the video so students can truly control the pace of the video, it is still a valuable way to transfer information in the classroom.

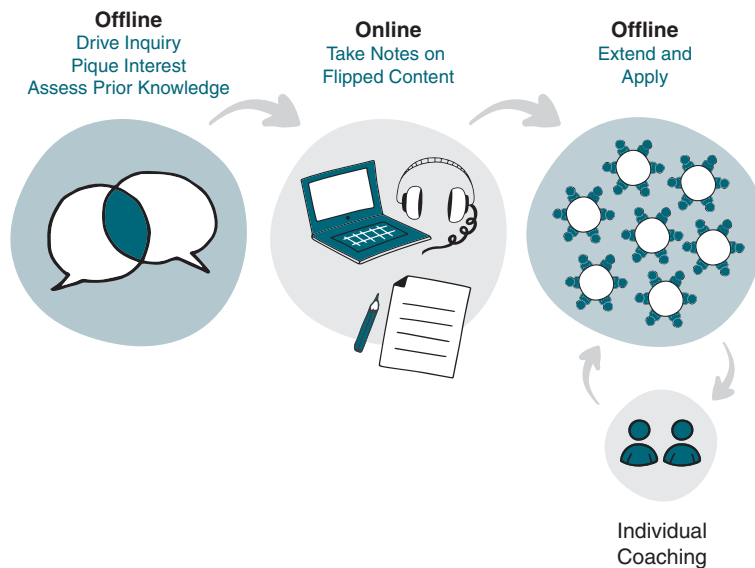
Shifting the videos into the classroom and weaving them into blended learning models alleviates concerns about access to technology and the Internet beyond the classroom, as well as concerns over the amount of homework that many students are being asked to complete after spending seven hours at school. Below are examples of how teachers can use video as part of the Whole Group Rotation, Station Rotation, and Playlist Models to create time and space in the classroom to work directly with students. The goal of using video should be to give students more control over their learning and to free the teacher from the front of the room.

Whole Group Rotation With Video Instruction

The Whole Group Rotation Model is an updated spin on the classic Lab Rotation Model. Originally, the Lab Rotation Model was defined as a blended learning model in which students rotate from offline learning in the classroom to online learning in a computer lab. The increasing number of 1:1 initiatives where every student has a device to use in school and growing access to Chromebook carts has eliminated the need for students to leave their classrooms to work online. Instead, the Whole Group Rotation Model describes an intentional weaving together of offline and online work in the classroom as pictured in Figure 5.1.

When I train teachers on the Whole Group Rotation Model using video content, I suggest they think about planning their lessons in three discrete parts.

1. Begin with an offline activity designed to pique the students' interest, assess their prior knowledge, collect formative assessment

FIGURE 5.1 Planning a Whole Group Rotation With Video

data, or drive inquiry. This pre-video activity is best when it is collaborative and student centered. It functions to get kids thinking about a specific topic and provides context for the video they are going to watch.

2. Ask students to grab a device and put on their headphones to self-space through the video content. This requires that teachers create a buffer of time around the video so students can control the pace. For example, if the video is 7 minutes, I would allow 14 or 15 minutes for students to make their way through the information and take notes. Some students will get through the video quickly, so having a “next steps” ready for them helps eliminate distractions. Other students will move more slowly through the information and need the entire time to watch and take notes on the video.
3. Once all students have seen the video content, transition them to the “apply” activity. Since they are applying new information, I advocate designing collaborative student-centered activities that encourage students to have conversations and work together. It is often when students are attempting to apply new information that they get stuck or need help. When they do this work in the classroom, they have the benefit of the teacher and a community of peers they can lean on for support.

As students practice applying the new information, the teacher can pull individual or small groups of students for additional explanation, scaffolds, and support.

Playlists With Video Instruction

The Playlist Model, or Individual Rotation Model, has each student work through an individual playlist of activities. Playlists work well for formal writing assignments, projects, and entire units of study. The goal of the Play-list Model is to provide students a higher degree of agency and a more per-sonalized learning experience.

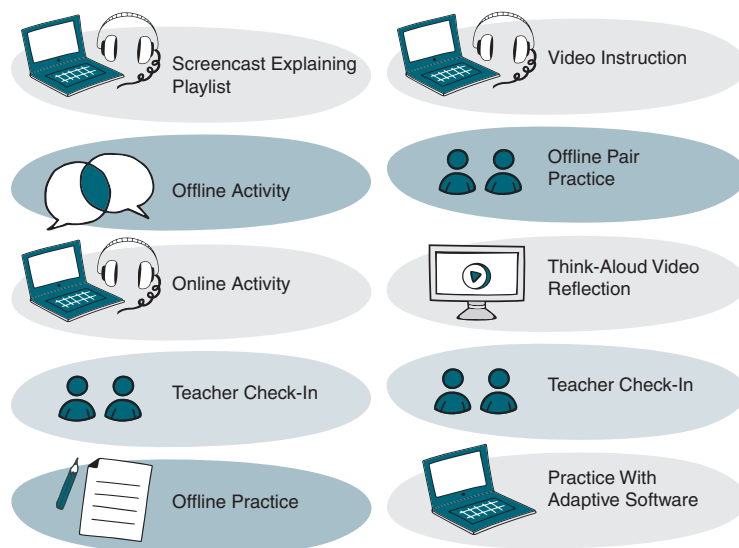
When I design a playlist, I always start with a basic template. I include all of the activities that I believe *most* students will benefit from, and then I cus-tomize individual playlists to ensure that students who need additional scaf-folding receive it, and those who are ready for next level work are challenged.

My playlists mix the following elements:

- Screencasts
- Offline tactile activities
- Video explanations, instruction, and modeling
- Online quizzes
- Personalized skill practice with adaptive software
- Offline pair practice
- Online exploration and research
- Peer evaluation
- Self-evaluation
- Conferencing
- Side-by-side assessments

The Playlist Model requires significant time on the front end as teachers pull the various parts of the playlist together. However, once a playlist is created, teachers enjoy copious time in class to conference with students, coach individual students, provide personalized support and feedback, and assess student work.

When I design a playlist, as pictured in Figure 5.3, I try to balance online and offline tasks so students are not staring at their computer screens for long stretches of time. There are moments when they have to seek out other stu-dents to complete collaborative tasks because I want them interacting with each other. I worry that teachers with unlimited access to technology neglect

FIGURE 5.3 Planning a Playlist With Video

offline learning, which is essential to forming meaningful relationships and developing critical soft skills. Blended learning should strive to achieve a balance between online and offline work in the classroom.

I also build “Teacher Check-Ins” into the playlist. When students hit a “Teacher Check-In,” they bring their work to my desk so we can review and discuss their progress. These teacher check-ins are a powerful way for me to connect with individual learners, track their progress, and make sure they have everything they need to be successful. During these conversations, we can discuss strategies and additional practice that will help them to continue to improve and make progress. I use these moments to provide additional instruction, support, and feedback. I also add tasks to a student’s playlist if they need more practice or review in a particular area.

Video plays a key role in these playlists because I record an introduction to the playlist, instructional videos, and videos that model a process. Incorporating videos into a playlist means I can use my teacher check-in time to build on video instruction or clarify areas of confusion without having to repeat the same instruction multiple times. Essentially, the video allows me to replicate myself so that students get the explanation and instruction they need when they need it.

ADDRESSING CONCERNS ABOUT USING VIDEO IN SCHOOL

I’ve met plenty of educators who question the value of video. They raise concerns about the time it takes to produce videos, they point out that it is

simply a virtual “sage on the stage,” or they worry students don’t really learn anything when they watch videos. On all three counts, I disagree.

First, creating a video does not need to be a time-consuming endeavor. In the next section of this chapter, I describe a quick two-step strategy for creating and sharing video content. It is important for teachers to remember that their live instruction is not perfect, so they should not expect their videos to be free from flaws.

Second, the virtual sage-on-the-stage argument is only valid if teachers are recording long lecture-style videos and simply asking students to take notes on the information. I encourage teachers to keep their videos short. A good guideline for video length is to limit the length of their videos to approximately 1 minute for each year their students have been in school. For example, if you are working with first-grade students, I would not record anything over 2 minutes since they have only been in school for 2 years. If you are recording videos for sophomores in high school, you can probably get away with videos that are 11 minutes long. In addition to keeping the videos short, teachers should focus on “flipping and engaging,” so students are doing something that encourages them to interact with the new information. Teachers can use a tool like Edpuzzle to wrap a video in a lesson, so that students are asked to respond to questions as they progress through the video. Alternatively, teachers can pair a video with an online discussion prompt that asks students to take a position on an issue or reflect on a topic that was presented in the video. Teachers should not relegate students to passive consumers of information—live or via video. We must engage their higher-order thinking skills when designing flipped lessons.

Finally, the argument that kids don’t learn effectively from video does not reflect the habits of young people, who frequently turn to YouTube to learn beyond the classroom. When kids want to learn how to do something at home—apply makeup, play a video game, or build gadgets—many go to YouTube to find a video. This tendency to turn to video for explanations, instructions, and tutorials outside of school makes a compelling case for using video content in school. If students are going to rely on video content to learn, then we can help them to be more effective consumers of video content.

CREATING YOUR OWN VIDEO CONTENT

Teachers often ask, “How do you create your videos?” I follow a simple two-step approach to creating and sharing my videos. First, I create a Google Slide presentation with all of my content. Teachers can use any presentation software, including PowerPoint or Keynote, to create slides, but I like Google Slides because those files live in my Google Drive and do not take up space on my computer.

I have some basic rules that I keep in mind when I am creating my presentations:

- ***Less is more.*** I keep the word count on my slides low and try to be as clear and concise as possible. I do not want to overwhelm my students with verbiage. Instead, I use bulleted information that I can expand on with my verbal explanation. The more words that a teacher adds to a slide, the longer it will take students to get through the video because a lot of students will try to copy the content word for word.
- ***Media is a must.*** Media can help to make a concept clear, engage the audience, and help students to remember key concepts. I include photos, graphs, charts, and images in my presentations to help students understand and remember the content.
- ***Animations draw attention to key pieces of information.*** Adding animation makes it possible to reveal information on cue so students are not jumping ahead to take notes on information I have not explained yet. Instead, I display information as I am talking about it. I also use animation in the slide to underline or box keywords and phrases to draw the students' eyes to specific words or information on the slide.

Once I have my slides ready to go, I record a screencast. Unlike a movie, which records my face, a screencast is a recording of what is viewable on my computer screen and the audio of my voice. So, my students see my presentation projected and hear my voice, but they do not see my face. There are some recording tools, like Screencastify, that allow teachers to record a screencast and display a small image of themselves presenting in the corner of the screen. I find the small video of the teacher presenting distracting as a learner, so I always limit my instructional videos to a screencast with audio.

I use QuickTime on my Mac or Screencastify—a free Chrome Extension—to record my screencasts. The benefit of using Screencastify is that it allows teachers to automatically save video recordings to Google Drive, where they can be shared directly with students. For teachers working with younger students or at schools that block YouTube, saving videos to Google Drive makes it easy to bypass a video hosting site. Instead, teachers can share the video from Google Drive with a link, just like they would share a Google Document.

CURATING VIDEO CONTENT ONLINE

I upload my videos to YouTube and share them with anyone who wants to watch them. At first, the idea of sharing my videos online was daunting. I am not perfect, and my videos are not perfect. I worried that people online would be critical and cruel. To my surprise, the response from students around the world has been incredibly positive. I receive comments on my YouTube channel weekly from students all over the world who have watched and enjoyed my vocabulary and writing videos. It is pretty incredible to live in a time

when I can literally teach students I will never meet simply by posting my video content on YouTube.

I realize that some teachers will like the idea of using video with students, but they will not want to create their own videos. Some teachers may not have the equipment they need, the time, or the confidence to create their own videos. That is okay! There is so much high-quality video content available online that teachers can access and use in their classrooms. I would encourage teachers to search YouTube for video content. You may need to sift through videos, but there are some reliably strong video producers posting content on YouTube.

The beauty of using video content to flip learning has very little to do with the videos. The magic of this approach lies in the ability to shift the control and the focus from the teacher to the students. When done well, the flipped learning model—whether integrated into a Whole Group Rotation, Station Rotation, or Playlist—should create time and space for the teacher to provide more personalized support as students work.

BOOK STUDY QUESTIONS

1. How much time on average do you spend in class on direct instruction, modeling, or reviewing directions? What type of content can you imagine recording and making available via video?
2. Do you currently use any video content with students? If so, what types of videos do you use? How do you use them? If not, why haven't you used videos with your students? Are there any obstacles or challenges you face when it comes to using video content with students?
3. What are the potential benefits of using video? Do you have concerns about using video content with your students? How might you mitigate these potential challenges?
4. Which blended learning models do you currently use? What role does video play in those models? How might you expand your use of videos? If you add more video content to your lessons, how might that impact the way you use your time in class with students?
5. Will you create your own videos or curate online videos to use with students? What are the benefits and drawbacks of each approach? If you are going to create your own video content, what process will you use to produce and share them?
6. How can video content help you to actualize the partnership model described in Chapter 2 of this book? How can video help teachers to create more time and space to work directly with students?