

Let's Practice What We Teach: Flipping Faculty Development

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Faculty everywhere are flipping their classes, but can we flip faculty development? That's the question I asked myself when I flipped the pre-conference workshop at the 2016 Teaching Professor Technology Conference. What I discovered is that we can "practice what we teach" and design faculty-centered learning experiences much the same way we design student-centered learning experiences.

In this article, I provide a few recommendations for flipping a faculty development workshop. For further inspiration, the article concludes with a showcase of the work created by the participants in my workshop last fall.

Define the flip

In my work, the FLIP means to "Focus on your Learners by Involving them in the Process." The flip is a philosophy, a model, and an approach I use to engage my learners in higher level thinking during class time. My learners are faculty and my "class time" is the time I spend with them in workshops and programs. This definition of the flip can work really well for faculty development professionals since we often don't know who will attend an event or if they have access to pre-workshop materials. Additionally, many of the faculty development events I lead are stand-alone workshops or "one and done" events, which makes it difficult to create continuity or build community among the participants as I would with students in a semester-long course.

If you're thinking about how to flip a faculty development workshop, my first recommendation is to define what the flipped model means to you and your learners. Don't let definitions from other contexts and environments limit what you can do when you work in a professional development or continuing education setting.

Shift the focus

When you think about planning a flipped lesson in your class, I recommend starting with the question, "What are students going to DO in class today?" When you ask yourself this question, it shifts the focus of the physical learning environment and encourages you to think about how students can connect with each other, with the course material, and with you. You're not the focus. What if we asked the same question when we plan a faculty development

workshop? Ask yourself, “What could faculty DO together during this workshop?” Or, “What are they going to *create* together?” Make sure at least one of your learning outcomes allows for a higher level of Bloom’s Taxonomy. Design the workshop so faculty can apply, analyze, or create something to apply what they’ve learned or to prepare something for their own class.

This works well in professional development workshops because faculty have experience. They bring stories, examples, and new ideas to share in every learning environment. When we flip it, we can leverage their expertise, advice, and creativity to enhance the learning environment and allow opportunities for colleagues to learn from each other within and across disciplines. They’re not just listening to a speaker. They are involved in the process of sharing, analyzing, and creating something.

Showcase the results

Finally, if you decide to flip a faculty development workshop, share the work beyond the scope of the event. Show faculty how their contributions matter and how their work (and time) is valued. Speaking of sharing, it’s time to showcase the work from the participants who attended my flipped pre-conference workshop. Here’s how I flipped it!

Context: The title of the workshop was, “Don’t Waste a Minute of Class Time: How to Use [Focusing Activities](#) in the Flipped Classroom.” It was a three-hour preconference workshop with approximately 50 participants. During the first two hours, faculty participated in 10 different focusing activities, just as if they were students in a classroom. Then we debriefed the process and they used a worksheet to plan a focusing activity for one of their own courses.

The FLIP: During the final 30 minutes of the workshop, I flipped it and asked faculty to “*create* a resource for your colleagues who want to learn more about focusing activities.” I gave them creative freedom to choose their format; they could create blog post, compile a list, record a video, develop an infographic or picture, create a checklist, or develop their own idea. It was entirely up to them. There were 11 groups representing a variety of disciplines and backgrounds. Here are two projects the faculty created:

- Podcast: [Open in Google Drive](#)
- Tip Sheet: [Download Word doc.](#)

It was exciting for me to see their creativity and to observe their different processes, and I’m inspired by their interpretations of the workshop content. If you want more inspiration, [visit my blog](#) to see all 11 group projects.

Now, it’s your turn. Have you flipped a faculty development event? What advice do you have for others who want to try it?

Barbi Honeycutt is a speaker, scholar, and author. She is the founder of [FLIP It Consulting](#) in Raleigh, N.C., and has published several books and developed an online [course](#) for faculty who want to learn how to FLIP it. Connect on Twitter [@BarbiHoneycutt](#) and on her [blog](#).

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