Implementing a Flipped Classroom: Student Generated Wikis and Videos

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Over the years, I noticed a shift in the ways students are learning and the ways that they are using technology in the classroom. With that realization, I began to consider how we, as instructors, have not been paying as much attention as we should to these changing methods of learning. It prompted me to incorporate a varied technologies and media into my courses, and allow students to take over the baton and create online artifacts for the course. This entails that students, by drawing on active learning techniques, put technical skills into practice, and to develop their technology literacy in a way that supports their professional career paths.

For example, I used *Connect*, an online Learning Management System (LMS), to organize a third year course on International Organizations (IOs) with about 60 students. I especially drew on the built-in Wiki collaboration tool and the file upload tool for students to post videos in a space that the whole class could access.

For the course, which consists of 3-hour lectures, I presented a case study and engaged students in theoretical work for the first 90 minutes, and then put them into small groups and got them to work on the cases for the latter half of the class. Their "lecture material" was uploaded onto Connect as online learning modules.

For the case studies, each group would work through them while adopting a specific perspective that was assigned to them – e.g. one group might take the viewpoint of a state delegate in an IO, and another take on the perspective of an industry leader, or a farmer, or independent experts or scientists. Taking these viewpoints, they would create 7 to 8 posts on the Wiki collaboration tool for a given case study (e.g. the IMF and the Banana Dispute, the United Nations and Human Rights). This allowed students to have a much more holistic views of specific cases. Furthermore, by the end of the term, the students had peer-created and reviewed resources that they could draw from for their final research papers. The Wiki assignments included citing their sources and compiling accurate information – thus sharpening their research skills. Students have also commented that these activities helped them understand the material better and allowed them to learn from each other.

As for the video projects, I thought it could be a way for students to demonstrate their communication skills and their ability to succinctly convey information to others in a limited amount of time, while also allowing them to be creative. Students wrote a research paper by the end of the course, but instead of just simply being graded on their paper, students also produced a 3-minute video about their research findings. Students videos summarized their paper in visual form and according to a set of rubrics. The videos were uploaded onto Connect and then grouped under categories, such as the United Nations role in genocide prevention or the European Union and the sovereign debt crisis. This resulted in us having a collection of various research topics in visual form, organized by topic. I was absolutely amazed by what the students came up with. Some dressed up as news anchors and created their videos to resemble a TV news segment, while others made stop-motion videos and even rap songs. They were just extremely creative and, given the larger categories under which each video fell, allowed for larger discussions in class on these larger topics.

Moreover, what I wanted to achieve with the course was to first help students understand the theories, threshold concepts and role of different actors in the study of International Organizations as a central topic of World Politics.

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Second, I wanted to prepare them to become more proficient in consuming news about International Organizations and be able to present and write about politics and policies as informed citizens. Finally, I sought to prepare them for actual work in these International Organizations and related fields. Overall, I aimed to design the course in such a way that would allow me to achieve these larger learning goals.

Instead of lecturing at the students during the 3 hours of class time, I posted the course material onto Connect and organized them into learning modules. Because of that, I was able to cut the lectures out of the classroom and bring in peer engagement and participatory learning instead. As I mentioned, I got them to work on case studies in small groups in the second half of the allocated class time. I would then walk around and listen carefully to the group discussions, and not only was I able to get a good understanding of the students' comprehension and comfort with the material, but I was also able to help them individually with questions. I engaged directly in conversations with them, as opposed to only being able to answer a couple of questions on a very general scale in a large lecture setting.

About the author:

Dr. Jan Lüdert is the Head of Programs at the DWIH – German Centre for Research and Innovation New York City. He previously served as Associate Professor at City University of Seattle where he was the inaugural Director of Curriculum and Instruction. He has held positions as Visiting Research Scholar at the Ralph Bunche Institute for International Studies at City University of New York's Graduate Center as well as Research Associate with the DFG 'Dynamics of Security' project at Philipps Marburg University. He is an alumnus of Seattle's World Affairs Council Fellows and UBC Liu Institute for Global Issues Scholar programs. He is the author of *Non-State Actors at the United Nations* (Routledge); co-author of *The United Nations Trusteeship System* (Routledge); and editor of *Signature Pedagogies in International Relations* (E-International Relations).