

What Are 5 FAQ's About Faculty Roles in the Flipped Class?

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Barbara Honeycutt & Sarah Egan Warren

Barbi Honeycutt: Welcome to this 20 Minute Mentor. Our topic today is, what are the five frequently asked questions about faculty roles in the flipped classroom? This is a helpful topic for those of you who are faculty, as you think about your changing role in the flipped environment. It's also helpful for those of you who are faculty developers, as you think about how to develop programs and professional development opportunities for faculty on your campus.

My name is Barbi Honeycutt and I'm the founder of Flip It Consulting in Raleigh, North Carolina. I'm also the Director of Graduate Teaching Programs and Professional Development Programs at North Carolina State University. And I also serve as an Adjunct Assistant Professor in the College of Education at NC State.

Sarah Egan Warren: And hi. I'm Sarah Egan Warren. I'm a Flip It associate, as well as the Education and Training Director for Reify Media. I'm also the Assistant Director of Professional Writing Program at NC State University.

Barbi Honeycutt: We have been traveling all around the country, talking to faculty from all types of campuses.

Sarah Egan Warren: Right. Colleges, universities, community colleges, faculty development centers, conferences, workshops.

Barbi Honeycutt: Yes, we have been all over.

Sarah Egan Warren: And we've heard lots of questions. And in fact, we put together a list of frequently asked questions that we hear from instructors about the roles that they must take when they're moving into a flipped class. And maybe you have one of those questions, too.

Barbi Honeycutt: Excellent. And that's why we invite you to join us for a conversation, as we explore the top five questions faculty ask about their role in the flipped classroom.

Sarah Egan Warren: And then we're going to give you strategies for each one of the questions, and we're going to challenge you to try them out. So before we get started, where do we always begin?

Barbi Honeycutt: Learning outcomes.

Sarah Egan Warren: Learning outcomes. So our first learning outcome is that when you watch this video, you should be able to recognize the top five questions that faculty ask about the flipped classroom.

Barbara Honeycutt & Sarah Egan Warren

Barbi Honeycutt: And in addition to recognizing the questions, we also want to identify some strategies for you, as you think about how you're going to address each of those questions. You know, we just want to take it a step further.

Sarah Egan Warren: So this is our first frequently asked question number one. How does my role change?

Barbi Honeycutt: Great question and I see this question quite frequently. And it helps to define this question first by taking a look at what we mean when we say, what is a flipped classroom? And so in our work, we define a flipped classroom a little differently than some of the popular definitions that are out there. And so we like to hold Bloom's Taxonomy up against the Flip Model that we've been working so hard on. And so you can see here, in this model here, with the lecture that typically in the classroom, the students are typically remembering and understanding information that's being delivered to them or at them.

And then we send them outside of class where they do the creating and evaluating. In a Flip Class, we reverse this model. Outside of class is where we, you know, Sarah, that's where we offload the content. Right. And we offload that content and put it in a video or put it in some sort of reading or pre-class work, so that we can spend in-class time really focusing on the analysis, evaluation and creation of information.

And you know, Sarah, when I work with faculty, I always start the question, and you and I have talked about this is it's when you get ready to plan, you sit down, and you ask yourself, not what am I going to go in and talk about today. I know you've seen this when you say, now what am I going to cover today? And we've both really shifted our questions when we go in and plan a lesson. And we say, no, the question is "what do students need to do today?" And that slight shift in the question changes the environment completely.

Sarah Egan Warren: It absolutely does and, in fact, it changes what you're supposed to be doing in the classroom. So no longer are you the Sage on the Stage, but you've got to flip that role to be the Guide on the Side.

Barbi Honeycutt: That's excellent. You know, for a lot of us that's a challenge. I know, you've talked a lot about how that's a challenge for you. Now we like to be really in control of our learning environments, and we like to know exactly what's coming next and what's happening. And Sarah and I both do this, but the Flipped Class requires you to rethink that role in the classroom. It has you moving from a place of very high control and you're an active participant in that environment and you're in charge; to moving to a place of letting go and being more of what I call actively passive.

Sarah Egan Warren: Right. I absolutely love that idea that you're still involved in the process. You want your students, though, to be more active and you've got to be a little bit passive. And this is really hard. It's risky. It's a challenge. It's something that can be really difficult for faculty who are used to being that Sage on the Stage. And so moving to Guide on the Side is a hard thing to do.

Barbi Honeycutt: It is. It's hard to sort of to let go of that control. And so we want to give you at least one strategy today to help you think through how you might build your skills to become more comfortable in a space as being the Guide on the Side.

So one suggestion that we have for you, it involves five steps here. One is for you to assign a small group task to your students. Perhaps you ask them a question. Maybe give them a problem to solve--a passage to analyze, whatever that may be. And then your job is to just visit each group in the classroom. And your role here is to just listen. You're trying not to contribute to the group conversation. You're really trying to listen and see what they're saying. And if you need something to do--I know Sarah.

Sarah Egan Warren: It's so hard.

Barbi Honeycutt: She usually needs something to do. I invited her to just write down one idea from each group, as she goes around the classroom. Just write it down, maybe record it on her tablet or write it down a scratch sheet of paper in her notebook. And that allows her to stay focused on her role, and not so much on contributing to the student conversation. And then I challenge Sarah before I say, try not to talk to your students for five minutes. And that's really hard for her. You really have to learn to step back and let your students work through whatever the problem is that they're trying to solve. And that's the true essence of the flip.

Sarah Egan Warren: Right.

Barbi Honeycutt: So this is a great strategy to try, if you're trying to move your skills towards being more of a Guide on the Side.

Sarah Egan Warren: So that brings us to our next frequently asked question, question number 2. Do I have to flip everything?

Both: No!

Sarah Egan Warren: No, not everything can or should be flipped. This is not what we're trying to advocate. We are not saying that everything should be flipped in the

Barbara Honeycutt & Sarah Egan Warren

classroom. You want to find those moments that can be flipped. Because we have limited time, we have limited energy.

Barbi Honeycutt: And, Sarah, let me just jump in for a minute. Not only do we have limited time and energy, but our students have limited time and limited energy. And we have to think about that when we are designing our flipped classrooms.

Sarah Egan Warren: Absolutely. And you know, if you overdo anything, it's going to lose its effectiveness. So flipping everything is not your best bet.

Barbi Honeycutt: Exactly. So we have one strategy for you, guys as you're looking at your classroom and thinking about what you might want to flip. And the first question is, what strategies when you teach give you the best results? And I don't just mean in terms of, all my students' grades have increased and things like that. I mean, what gets you passionate as a teacher? What gets you excited? What re-energizes you in the classroom? Something you're just really good at and it's like, yes this is why I do what I do. Do more of those. And so for me, that involves playing games with students. I love to create educational games. I love to do structured worksheets. And things that allow students to be there in the moment with me. Sarah, you have a different approach.

Sarah Egan Warren: I actually enjoy doing videos, either making my videos myself or creating that content by collecting videos that other people have already created for me. And introducing that as part of that lower level, remembering, understanding aspect of Bloom's Taxonomy for my students.

Barbi Honeycutt: It's interesting that you mention videos because that is the strategy that I want to talk about for number three with me. Videos and Barbi--we just don't go together very well. It takes me so much time and so much energy to create videos, and I still do them. You know, Sarah, I think you've recommended to me to still try these videos, try things outside of my comfort zone. But I do less of those and more of the things that are in my comfort zone. Things that I really enjoy doing. And so for me, creating videos in the flipped class. That's just one tool, but it's not in my wheelhouse. It's not the thing that I do most naturally.

Sarah Egan Warren: But you have tried it.

Barbi Honeycutt: I have tried it.

Sarah Egan Warren: And she keeps trying it.

Barbi Honeycutt: I'm trying it now. So here we go.

Barbara Honeycutt & Sarah Egan Warren

Sarah Egan Warren: So that brings us to our frequently asked question, number three. How do I even know what to flip?

Barbi Honeycutt: That's a great question because you can't flip everything. So we got to decide, how are you going to figure out what to flip? And it always comes back to those learning outcomes. Start with your learning outcomes, and take a look and see, what's worthy of being flipped? What's the thing that you can move outside of class that your students can master on their own without your assistance? And then really focus on those higher-level learning outcomes when you're in class with your students.

Sarah Egan Warren: So you want to look for what we like to call flippable moments.

Barbi Honeycutt: Love that term.

Sarah Egan Warren: So again we're not talking about flipping an entire class.

Barbi Honeycutt: Right.

Sarah Egan Warren: Right. We're looking for these little pieces within your lesson that can be flipped. And how you find them is looking for three things. The first is the fundamentals.

Barbi Honeycutt: The fundamentals.

Sarah Egan Warren: So what are the things that you've got to be covering with your students at that lower level of remembering and understanding. The second is looking for confusion. Because anytime the students are struggling with a concept, maybe they need some more support. Either in terms of a game or a video or an activity that's going to help them understand what's going on a little bit better. And the third, which I think is probably the most important for both students and faculty, would be looking for boredom. If you are bored, they're bored. And taking that moment and flipping it is maybe going to save it.

Barbi Honeycutt: Exactly. And I think I really like the way you talk about these flippable moments and this allows you to invest your time and energy where you need it most. And Sarah and I were just at a workshop last week. And one of the people in the workshop said, you know what? If something is working and it's not flipped, don't flip it.

Sarah Egan Warren: Right.

Barbi Honeycutt: If your students get it, and they understand it, and everything's working, that's not a place where you need to invest your energy. Invest your

Barbara Honeycutt & Sarah Egan Warren

energy, as Sarah said, in those flippable moments. Where do you see the confusion? Where you see the boredom? And where do you see students that just need more support in the classroom?

Sarah Egan Warren: So when you want to think about what you should do when you find out what you should flip. You've looked at those flippable moments, here's a couple of ideas. You can try creating a worksheet, develop a review game, maybe in a great case study, or you know what, you could even assign a student-led video where the students do the video if you don't want to do the video.

Barbi Honeycutt: I love that suggestion. Great.

Sarah Egan Warren: So this brings us to frequently asked question number four, do I have to record my own videos?

Both: No!

Sarah Egan Warren: The flip can include videos. And, in fact, most often if you've thought about a flipped class before, maybe you've made the connection with video because that's what you hear very commonly, right? But instructor-made videos are not required. You can do a number of things. Use resources that already exist. Have students make videos. You could do voice overs, instead of being on camera.

Barbi Honeycutt: And podcasts.

Sarah Egan Warren: Podcasts. There's all sorts of options, because a video is not your only choice.

Barbi Honeycutt: And, you know, a video of a lecture, is still a lecture, and we're trying to sort of move away from that model, so that we want to just think of more creative ways that we can bring that to the table. And I want to take a moment here and talk about, Sarah. You know, we talked about our model of the flipped classroom and it's different than what some of our colleagues are saying. For us, I flipping is really a philosophy. It's a state of mind. It's a culture change. It's a shift in the classroom. And it requires change not only in your role as the instructor, but in your students' role in the classroom, and even how that whole interaction happens. And so it really is a philosophy. The term "flip" is probably what's the fad or the trend, but this work is actually grounded in inquiry-guided learning and problem-based learning. I'm sure you have a few to add.

Sarah Egan Warren: Team-based learning, inverted instruction.

Barbara Honeycutt & Sarah Egan Warren

Barbi Honeycutt: And I'm glad you mentioned inverted instruction because that's actually where I first was introduced to the concept of this whole flipped terminology. And it actually came out of the Journal of Economics Education, believe it or not, about 15 years ago. And the term was inverted instruction. And we've come to challenge that and change that name into something called The Flip, but I want to make sure that our audience understands that the flip, while the term might be a fad, the absolute foundations of how students learn and how to design a class is not.

Sarah Egan Warren: So maybe video is not what you're going to pick. You could do video, but what else could students do to achieve those lower level learning outcomes before class? Well, they could design flash cards, play a matching game, that would be right up Barbi's alley, or have them create content. Have them go out and look for content and share videos.

Barbi Honeycutt: I like that. I really like those suggestions. And let's bring it on home now with question number five. So question number five is probably the number one question we get asked, and is probably the first question that we get asked, no matter where we go. And I'm sure you're curious about what the question is. You probably have had the question since the beginning of the video. And that question is, what about student resistance? And let me just start by saying that student resistance is that number one question. And Sarah, do you want to talk a little bit about this because this was your question when you came to me for the first time.

Sarah Egan Warren: Right. The students have a really hard time thinking about having to take a more active role in the classroom. Because they are not just able to sit there and "take notes" or zone out while the instructor is up there giving a long lecture. So this is a really important thing to think about. And students are really resistant to this change at first.

Barbi Honeycutt: At first. And that's an important concept, at first. So I want to talk just a moment about something called the stages of grief in the flipped classroom. And our dear friend, Rich Felder he's actually a faculty at NC State University in the College of Engineering. And he's done a lot of work over the last 30 years on active learning in engineering classes and even beyond.

And I found an article of his and had a conversation with him about the stages of grief in active learning. And when you put students in an active learning space, where they're taking ownership of that learning, as Sarah said, at first there may be some resistance. And part of this, you compare well to the stages of grief. So let's look at a couple of those stages of grief. One of those is it might be the reaction, you're paid to teach me. You've seen this before. Would you like to tell us about it?

Barbara Honeycutt & Sarah Egan Warren

Sarah Egan Warren: Absolutely. So you know this question is a lot about the student role. But I think it's really important about how the faculty responds to these student outbursts of, you're paid to teach me. It may look to a student at first, when you're the Guide on the Side, that you are not actually teaching. But that is just so not true.

Barbi Honeycutt: Right. The role changes.

Sarah Egan Warren: The role just changes. And the student is responsible for being much more active in their own learning. And so this is a challenge and a risk for them, as well as it is for the faculty member who is now stepping away from being that lecturer, and talking at the students. And instead having them do work right there in the classroom together, and being there to guide them through that.

Barbi Honeycutt: Excellent. And so you may see this reaction in your students. And it may not be the first reaction, but it might be something that you see. And so let's talk about another reaction you might see which is isolation. Students who isolate themselves from the group activities or the classroom and just say, you know, I will just do this on my own. I'll just go watch the videos on my own. I'll figure it out. I'll write my own papers. I don't want to be involved in this project. And have you seen that before in your classes?

Sarah Egan Warren: Absolutely. People who feel uncomfortable with that flipped environment are going to pull back. And so as the Guide on the Side, one of the things that you need to do in your new role is to be able to bring those students back into the group process, and making sure that they're participating.

Barbi Honeycutt: Absolutely. So these are great. Let's look at one more.

Sarah Egan Warren: Great.

Barbi Honeycutt: OK. This is where we want our students to be.

Sarah Egan Warren: This is exactly where we want them. When they say, "I see the value in what we're doing here". So they accept your new role as a faculty, as a Guide on the Side. They accept their new role, as well. And it makes the whole flipped classroom work better once they reach that acceptance.

Barbi Honeycutt: Absolutely. And they can see the value of their contributions in class. They're recognized. They can see the value of the interaction of the faculty member, the area of expertise. But we have to, as you said, Sarah, we have to help our students get there. Let's go back to what you said earlier.

Barbara Honeycutt & Sarah Egan Warren

Sarah Egan Warren: Right. They have to accept that Guide on the Side and being part of a group working together on a project.

Barbi Honeycutt: And so I want to take just a moment, I know this video is about the faculty's role, but Sarah and I absolutely believe in connecting that to thinking about your students' new role in this space. Sarah, you know you talk a lot about the Guide on the Side, and I want to take just a moment to make sure that we're recognizing our students' changing role in this flipped classroom. And we have to remember that we have to support our students in this journey, just like faculty are being supported through this journey. So in a lecture-based course or traditionally-based course, students' role might be taking notes, we hope right? We hope they're listening, we hope they're studying and taking tests. But let's compare this to the flipped classroom.

Sarah Egan Warren: Because in a flipped class, they would prepare before class, they would be coming into class asking questions, working in groups, and really taking some risks.

Barbi Honeycutt: Yes, and let's talk about that risk-taking for just a moment. It's not only a risk for you as a faculty member to be thinking about what are you going to do in the class. You're vulnerable in this space. You might not know the answers. It might be hard for you to stop for five minutes, and not talk to your students for a little while. And take on that actively passive role, but it's also a challenge for your students. It's a risk for them to raise their hand, to ask questions, to be on this journey of learning, which can sometimes be a messy, convoluted place.

So let's try, let's talk about one flip strategy that you could try to help your students through these stages of grief. And one of the first might be to just do one flipped strategy on the very first day of class. And what's interesting here, Sarah and I both flip our syllabus. So what I do with my syllabus is actually hide 10 questions in the syllabus. It's written in the same font as the rest of the syllabus. But they are discussion questions that push my students' thinking beyond the scope of the course, and really get them thinking about those upper level, higher level critical thinking skills.

And so we spend the whole first day, not talking about policy and procedure. But we wrap that around discussions about why we're doing what we're doing, how we're doing it, and why it matters. And, Sarah, tell us a little bit about how you flip your syllabus.

Sarah Egan Warren: So I teach a technical writing course. And what I hand out to the students on their first day is a terribly-formatted, terrible syllabus.

Barbara Honeycutt & Sarah Egan Warren

Barbi Honeycutt: Love this.

Sarah Egan Warren: And so right away the students jump in, and then I go where are the headings? Why isn't this information put together? Where are the tables? Why can't I find information easily? And so we start talking about on the very first day all of the content that we're going to cover throughout the semester. And so right away they're engaged, and I'm not just sitting there going, on day one this is what we're going to cover.

Barbi Honeycutt: Right. Right. And I love the fact that you have integrated this flipped strategy into, and it connects to, your learning outcomes for your course. And that brings it all the way back home. Start with those learning outcomes. You knew this was important. You knew it was probably boring in the past, maybe. And so you flipped it. And I think that's a fabulous way to bring in your learning outcomes and to do something on the very first day of class. So we challenge you to maybe try flipping your syllabus on the first day.

So, Sarah, this has been a great conversation between us as we explore these top five questions that faculty ask about their role in the flipped classroom. And we invite you to share your strategies with us. We'd love to hear what kinds of things you're trying in your classes, what kinds of things are working. And we also invite you to take a look at our blog. That's where we write a lot about other strategies we're learning about. We also bring in the research and the literature, as well as some of the experiences we've had as we travel across the country talking with faculty.

So at this point, what I'd like to do is to just take a moment--and we absolutely practice what we teach around here--and whenever we flip something, we like to reveal all of our flipped strategies. It's sort of a trademark, if you will, of flipped workshops. And so let's take a minute and just do two of the flipped strategies that we did in this 20 minute video.

Sarah Egan Warren: All right, so the first one we did was actually this conversation that Barbi and I had. Maybe it's a little bit different than what you might have anticipated when you looked at this 20 Minute Mentor video. But this is a challenge for you. Maybe you could grab a colleague and sit down and record a conversation about your field or your topic or something that you all are interested in that is going to support some learning outcomes for your students

Barbi Honeycutt: I love that and I love that it's a little different and mixes it up. It's not the same thing over and over again, which is part of that reducing effectiveness--doing too much for too long, and it's too much of the same.

Barbara Honeycutt & Sarah Egan Warren

So one other additional flip strategy that we'll share with you from this video is we use what's called chunking. And if you do chunking really well, that's where you take a large chunk, if you will, of content, and you break it up into smaller chunks. And when you do that, it allows your audience the chance to really see the break.

So in this case, we divided it into five questions that faculty have asked about the flipped classroom. This is much easier to remember than if we had just listed a long list of all the things we've heard before. And so if you can take a minute, look at your content. And really step back from it, and say, you know what? I can chunk this based on years. I could chunk this based on any type of theme. Chapters, time, there's a lot of things you can do when you chunk information.

Sarah Egan Warren: So we would like to hear from you. Please take a moment to fill out the survey at SurveyMonkey. And we really thank you for your time.