

Flipping the Classroom: A Strategy to Motivate Nursing Students to Learn Independently and Promote Active Learning

Article by Messina Sehunwe
PhD, Nursing, Texila American University
E-mail: messinahg@yahoo.co.uk

Abstract

The constantly changing healthcare environment poses a huge challenge to the nurses to be able to respond to the rapidly changing patient's conditions and needs. The nursing graduates therefore are forced to possess high level competence in order to provide safe and efficient nursing care. The Nurse Educators are also challenged to apply teaching strategies that can facilitate and encourage high level of critical thinking and clinical judgement skills. Flipping the classroom or inverted class is a strategy that is currently gaining popularity in an effort to motivate learners to learn and engage independently. This approach requires nursing students to actively participate in activities that push them beyond the level of memorization. Direct instruction is moved from the group space to the individualized learning space resulting in a dynamic transformed interactive environment where the Nurse educator becomes the guide instead of a distributor of information.

The Flipped learning has been viewed as an important pedagogical approach in increasing nursing student's achievement, motivation, collaboration and improving their skills necessary for further knowledge construction.

The purpose of this paper is to describe the current state of knowledge and practice of Flipped learning approach in nursing education and how the strategy can promote nursing students to learn independently.

Keywords: *Flipping the classroom, Inverted Classroom, Self-directed learning, Active learning, Learner engagement.*

Introduction

The constantly changing environment in healthcare poses a challenge to the nurses to be able to respond to the rapidly changing patient conditions and needs. The Nursing graduates are forced to adjust their techniques and mindset in order to provide safe and efficient nursing care. (Naber and Best, 2016). The Nurse Educators are challenged to also apply teaching strategies that can facilitate and engage high level of critical thinking, clinical reasoning and clinical judgement skills. (Matthews, 2016). It is essential that Nurse Educators be conversant with current evidenced based pedagogies which improves critical thinking and utilize active learning. Flipping the classroom or inverted class is a strategy that is currently gaining popularity in an effort to motivate learners to learn independently.

The Purpose of this paper is to describe the current state of knowledge and practice of flipped learning approach in nursing education and how it can promote nursing students to learn independently.

Background and significance

The Flipped classroom also referred to as flipped learning or inverted classroom is a pedagogical approach which has been described by several scholars as a strategy in which face to face instruction moves the group learning space (classroom) to an individual interactive learning environment (Ouda and Ahmed, 2016). Inverting the classroom implies that all the activities which traditionally were used to take place in the classroom are transferred outside the classroom space.

The main purpose of this approach is to allow self-paced and independent learning while dedicating classroom time effectively by engaging students using several activities such as discussions, debates and other active learning exercises. Flipping the classroom is viewed as active learning at its best. (Naber and Best, 2016) as it is an instructional method which engages students

learning. It requires learners to actively participate in meaningful learning activities and push them beyond the level of memorization (Demski, 2013).

Literature review

The concept of Flipped classroom is viewed as a strategy which has developed and evolved over time. (Ouda and Ahmed, 2016). However, its popularity is credited to Jonathan Bergmann & Aaron Sams who used live video recordings and screen casting software to record lecture for students who missed their lessons. In most disciplines especially those related to healthcare including nursing education teaching facts and content utilizing the traditional lecture method is no longer effective in producing graduates who possess creative and critical thinking skills. There is need for a paradigm shift towards Flipping the classroom to reduce the “teacher should tell me what I need to Know to pass the test syndrome. (Bristol, 2014).

In nursing education radical transformation towards effective teaching strategies which enhance educational quality and ensures that graduates are prepared for the current complex nursing practice is of utmost importance. Belinda and Hermanns, 2015, supports the observation that the nursing curricula is overloaded with content which is mostly delivered using ineffective teaching strategies. The Flipped classroom is preferred as an alternative instructional strategy which can encourage learner centred active learning resulting in improved clinical reasoning. (Jerri, et al 2015). Flipping the classroom has been further described by Naber and Best, 2016 as a technique which can improve critical thinking skills and recommended its utilization in nursing education to better educate future health care workers.

A study conducted by Davey, 2015 on exploring the extent to which flipping classroom stimulates student’s learning activity supports the idea that this model motivates students to learn independently. This is in agreement with the findings by Mikkelsen, 2015 who explored nursing student’s experiences towards flipping the classroom. It was revealed that this approach is valuable and resulted in high levels of satisfaction and engagement. However, several studies have indicated significant differences between student’s preferences and their perception regarding using the Flipped classroom. (Yacout and Shosha, 2016). Despite the variations several studies have outlined several benefits associated with this method as follows: Flexibility, Access to course material, improvement in professional skills and interpersonal skills, enhanced student engagement. (Karabulut, et al 2017).

Even though Flipping classroom as strategy has been described as beneficial some studies have reflected some of the common challenges as experienced by both learners and lecturers such as heavy workload, technical issues and insufficient knowledge about the new method. Learner resistance, deprived interaction with fellow students and reduced exposure to their teachers has been outlined as challenges faced by the learners. (Burak, et al, 2017).

Literature synthesis

The current literature demonstrates agreement that flip classroom model may be effective in promoting active learning and increasing student engagement. (Presti, 2016). Some studies reflect that just like any new method there are both challenges and benefits associated with this approach and that learners perceive its impact differently. However, despite the challenges flip classroom strategy remains an alternative strategy to be used for better development of clinical reasoning and judgement skills. It is also important to note that not all content or learning activities requires flip learning. Educators should be in a better position to identify and determine learning activities that fit well with flipping model. There is also an encouragement from various scholars to establish consistent instructional design for effective implementation of this approach.

Essential components of flip learning

The Flip Learning Network (FLN, 2014) suggested the four essential Pillars for effective Flip learning as follows

- 1) Flexible Environment which illustrates the flexible and adaptable learning environment where an educator re arranges their learning space in order to accommodate the learning needs of the students.

- 2) Learning culture depicts the paradigm shift from a student being a recipient of teaching to an active participant in the learning process. There is deliberate shift from teacher centered to learner centered approach.
- 3) Intentional Content allows the educator to decide on what and how to present concepts to the learners. Varieties of instructional methods are utilized to enhance effectiveness in learning.
- 4) Professional Educator describes the importance of the role of an educator in efficiently directing the Flip instruction. Educators though their role is less prominent but are viewed as essential ingredient that enables the Flip learning to occur.

Benefits of flipping the classroom in nursing education

Several studies have outlined numerous benefits associated with this approach which includes the following

- 1) Classroom time can be utilized in discussing higher order thinking skills rather than
- 2) wasting time on lower order activities.
- 3) Collaboration, communication and leadership skills are enhanced amongst learners.
- 4) Flip Model allows diversity in learning as variety of learning resources are provided.
- 5) Learners are actively engaged in a realistic learning experience.

In addition to the above benefits Jamaludin and Osman, 2014 further described flipped learning as increasing student engagement in all its dimensions which include behavioral, emotional, cognitive and agentic engagement.

Even though Flip learning is viewed as an important approach it does have some challenges just like any new method. Some authors have highlighted challenges which include resistance from students, unprepared students, lack of access to technology, heavy workload prior to and during class, and insufficient knowledge regarding the new approach. (Berge, 2015, Davey, 2015, Karabulut-Ilgu, et al, 2017).

Recommendation for further research

- 1) There is need for consistent and appropriate instructional design for effective implementation of this pedagogy.
- 2) Further development of the theoretical underpinnings of the approach in nursing education is required to strengthen the implementation framework.
- 3) Computer centers should be upgraded to the level which can encourage student interaction.

Conclusion

Flipped learning is no doubt gaining popularity in most disciplines including nursing education. However, Sams and Bergmann, 2013 suggested that it is important to start slow and consider the fact that flip classroom does not need to be flipped all the time. They also encourage the educators to know that not all material works well with flip approach therefore it is essential for educators to be able to determine when and what content to consider when using the approach. It necessary for facilitators to assist the learners to relate didactic content to clinical activities so as to enhance development of clinical reasoning and judgement.

It is important to note that flipped learning provides several benefits and challenges for both the instructors and students. Literature has revealed that learners perceived the approach differently some demonstrated satisfaction with its use while others prefer the traditional methods.

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