3. Flipping the Syllabus

Most courses are implicitly built upon a system of minimizing point losses, thereby placing an emphasis on what students do NOT know. Envision a system that instead puts the focus on demonstrated mastery of what students DO know. Professor John Boyer and his technical assistant Katie Pritchard will share their positive point accrual system that has evolved into a very successful pedagogical approach adopted in various sized classrooms. It is a particularly effective approach for very large classrooms (1000+) where individual student needs and scheduling can make a one-size-fits-all syllabus very impractical. They will share a broad range of ideas for student demonstrations of mastery and work with participants to explore how this approach can be adapted to their particular domain and course characteristics.
Flipping the Syllabus

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Job description:

- Core curriculum course
- Introductory subject of your choice
- Freshman-oriented but open to all academic levels
- Enrollment will also contain students with a diversity of academic majors, motivations, and backgrounds
- You will be provided with some Teaching Assistant and Technical Assistant support

...oh, and just one more detail...
About our course

Title: World Regions (Geography 1014)
Students: 2750
(of diverse origins, academic levels, and knowledge levels)
Live Lecture: Monday 7pm-9:45pm
Optional class movies show Tuesday or Wednesday at 7pm
2 large screens set up - one with lecture and other with rotating regional slides
Our Ultra-Large Class Basic Philosophy

- The instinct is to over-structure, have well-defined guidelines, and rigid due dates

- We have adopted the opposite approach:
  - Maximum flexibility in assignments
  - Maximum flexibility in communications
  - Increased interactions among all players

In essence....

To evolve from a rigid, top-down, and highly structured format to a more decentralized, user-defined, and personalized experience for the learners.
Thus...

+ Is learner-centered to allow students to engage and learn in ways best suited for them
  + Students are treated as individuals, take “ownership,” and create class synergy beyond walls of classroom

+ Incorporates social networking technologies to build community, engagement, and social presence in and out of the classroom.

* Creates a positive feedback loop to empower students when it comes to assessment

**How?**

**Flipping the Syllabus**

....a reference to shifting the paradigm of coursework from the instructor to the student, in both options and ownership.
First, “Flipping the Classroom” concept

A reversed teaching model that delivers instruction at home through interactive, teacher-created videos and moves “homework” to the classroom. Moving lectures outside of the classroom allows teachers to spend more 1:1 time with each student. Students have the opportunity to ask questions and work through problems with the guidance of their teachers and the support of their peers - creating a collaborative learning environment.
World Regions
The Professor professes...

Lecture Outline for World Regions

Click on the topic for lecture outline and video links

1. Intro
2. World Population Dynamics
3. World of States: Government types & territorial definitions
4. World Economies
5. International Organizations
7. Europe Region
8. Russia Region
9. Japan Region
10. Latin America Region
11. Middle East/North Africa Region
12. Sub-Saharan Africa Region
13. South Asia Region
14. East Asia Region
1. Intro to World Regions (3:15)


3. A Plan for Making Sense of the Planet (29:07)
   - Just for practice: Know Your World Regions Quiz
   - Just for fun: From The Onion: Nation of Andorra Not in Africa, Shocked US State Department Reports (2:03)

4. Know Your News & the Left vs. the Right (29:31)
   - Just for the smart kids: Jonathan Haidt on the moral roots of liberals and conservatives (18:39)
   - Just for instructors: Triangulate the Truth Activity Sheet (PDF)

5. Course Mechanics (13:48)
# GEOG 1014: World Regions

**John Boyer**

**Description**

A most brief introduction to the entire world and how it operates in the modern era. World Regions is a geographic survey designed to acquaint undergraduate students with a variety of geographic, historic, environmental, demographic, religious and economic characteristics of various areas of the world, but also covers a variety of systems which operate at the international scale. Outline: 1) Intro 2) World...

...More

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Total: 73 Items
Now, Flipping the Syllabus
Development of multiple avenues of opportunity for students to demonstrate their knowledge and performance, while accumulating points. At the end of the semester, the students’ points are tallied, based upon the works completed, and a final grade is assigned based upon a predetermined, criterion-referenced scale.

1) Logistically more feasible for large groups, working professional students, and on-line classes that inevitably will be in multiple time zones

2) Focus on point accumulation rather than point deduction; positive versus negative reinforcement

3) Encourages individual expression/creativity and empowers the user with choice
Diversity of student assessment options

1) 13 weekly quizzes x 30pts = 400 (+10 for doing all 13)
2) Midterm Exam = 125
3) Final Exam = 125
4) World Leaders Exam 50x2 = 100 (+10 for dressing up)
5) Films 10x15pts = 150 (15pts each up to 150)
6) Non-class events paper = 25/each
7) Atlas quizzes (11) = 110
8) Twitter Assignment = 200
9) Forum Commenting (14wks) = 210
10) Geographic Film Review = 25/each
11) Flash Quizzes = ???
12) Random Attendance = ???
13) Plaid Correspondents/Artists = ???

Total: 1500+ ???

1050 points = A, 950 points = B, etc.
The more conventional assessments:
Midterm Exam
Final Exam
World Leader Exams

Which leader does Osama Bin Laden hate the MOST?

A)  
B)  
C)  
D)  
E)  

[Image of leaders and two photos of people standing together]
The more conventional assignments:

International Film Viewings
Geographic Film Review Write-up
Outside Event Write-up
A word on our Film assignments.....
The more conventional assignments:
International Film Viewings
Geographic Film Review Write-up
Outside Event Write-up
The more flexible on-line assessments:

Weekly Quizzes on readings
Atlas Quizzes
“Flash” Quizzes on Podcasts
The really experimental on-line assignments incorporating social networking technologies:

- Twitter
- Forum Commenting
- Delicious/Storify News Aggregation
- “Flash” Quizzes on Podcasts
A word on our Twitter assignment.....

PlaidTymoshenko PA Yulia Tymoshenko
@Plaid_Putin Then @PlaidYanukovych needs to get the government to jump out like a cat that's being tickled.
13 hours ago

Plaid_Calderon PlaidFelipe Calderon
@Plaid_Obama, care to help a brother out? Maybe send some troops down my way? I'm on the hot seat here, buddy!!! #IShouldntBe
13 hours ago

Plaid_Putin Plaid Vladimir Putin
@PlaidTymoshenko: Lovely Yulia, you are confuse. By alienating the West, it is Ukraine who is curling up in our lap...not other way around.
13 hours ago

PlaidTymoshenko PA Yulia Tymoshenko
Ukraine, it is clear we are not free. Get Russia's hand out of our government!
13 hours ago

http://twitter.com/#!/list/plaidavenger/world-leaders
Moshiul Alam Sarker @AlamMoshiul
@Plaid_Gul Mr President you don't know how much I like you, you know why because your tremendous personality and your simplicity.

Plaid Abdullah Gul @Plaid_Gul
@AlamMoshiul Thank you for your kind words.

Plaid Mariano Rajoy @Plaid_Rajoy
@Plaid_Hillary Thank you for the recognition. We are your partner in #eurozone.

Vanessa Gibson @vigibson
@Plaid_Goodluck I think you're doing a great job. U r what our country needs.

Goodluck Jonathan @Plaid_Goodluck
@vigibson It is people like you that make my job so much more enjoyable.

Plaid Wen Jiabao @Plaid_Wen
Announced that Beijing was prepared to trade with the Pacific Alliance, a new trading bloc consisting of Chile, Colombia, Mexico and Peru.

Plaid Leon Panetta @Plaid_Panetta
@plaid_obama When is our next meeting? Looking forward to seeing you and discussing a few things!

Plaid Vladimir Putin @Plaid_Putin
@kamikazetang Russia- our holy nation! Russia- our beloved country!

Plaid Dilma Rousseff @Plaid_Rousseff
@Plaid_Obama how you feeling about that Egyptian funding? online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424127887324100604576304830225870688...
Colombian Drug Traffickers Captured In Venezuela

paisley  Posted: 08 February 2012 02:47 PM

http://www.iaht.com/article.asp?ArticleId=469094&CategoryId=12393
Two of Columbia’s most wanted drug traffickers were arrested with the help of Venezuela. Will this strengthen the relationship between Santos and Chavez?

crowders  Posted: 08 February 2012 05:43 PM

It’s good to see that at least the South/Central American countries are willing to work together on the cartel wars. As demonstrated here, the efforts to stop drug trafficking will be much more successful if the governments involved are united.

lacrosse26m  Posted: 08 February 2012 06:26 PM

It is great to see that these men were captured and arrested, but does anyone else think that the next member in line will step up and continue the trafficking? I feel like this is a common for people in the drug cartels, to have back up plans in case one or more people are arrested, to ensure that the money keeps flowing, and to make sure the group still has as much power as possible. Hopefully I am wrong, and this arrest will lead to the crumbling of the cartel.

Iscott9  Posted: 08 February 2012 06:39 PM

No you are total right that do have back up people. They even have back ups for back ups, so it is a never ending cycle. With that being said they should continue arresting them and eventually they will see how serious people are about stopping drug trafficking. unfortunately this wont even stop it, it will probably just slow it down.

crowders  Posted: 08 February 2012 08:03 PM

Hey, at least they are sending a message that they will fight back. Though they may have backups, capturing the cartel leaders is certainly more effective than doing nothing. If successes such as this one continue, morale among the drug lords will be lowered, and they may be forced to use caution rather than being openly violent.
China plans manned space mission this month from China to orbit their experimental module. The Chinese government has not announced how long the mission will last but the crew will dock and live on the module for some time. China launched its own space station when it was turned away from the International Space Station, due to U.S. objections.

This illustration shows Chinese astronauts working in the Shenzhou-9 (Shenzhou IX) spacecraft and the Tiangong-1 space lab module. (Imaginechina via AP Images)

(AP) BEIJING - China will launch three astronauts this month to dock with an orbiting experimental module, and the crew might include its first female space traveler, a government news agency said Saturday.
The World's Plaidiest News Source

In Other News...10.11.11

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization has been the most powerful and effective defensive alliance of all time...but it's in bad trouble all of the sudden, and easily in its weakest position ever since the group was founded over 60 years ago. Loss of defined mission and over-extension are just the start of NATO's issues; the European members have long been under-contributing to the cause, and the US is being forced to cut military spending which will affect its contributions as well. All NATO countries are undergoing serious recession bordering on depression, and most are also decreasing their military expenditures...just at a time when the group is involved in more missions than ever before. Can the alliance survive?

Related Plaidcasts:
At 60, NATO turning into NOT-O

Keywords: NATO, US, Leon Panetta, Robert Gates, Secretary of Defense, Afghanistan, Libya, Europe

Comments (4)
PROS
The benefits of using the flipped syllabus:

- Positive reinforcement instead of negative
- Maximum of flexibility to facilitate different learning styles of the students
- Maximum of flexibility to allow for best assessment option for the student
- Maximum of flexibility to facilitate different schedules of the students
- Has a much more ‘real life’ component in terms of workplace ethics and self-motivation
- Students are held to a MUCH higher degree of accountability...even more so than in their other ‘hard’ classes
- No excuses, no re-scheduling, no ‘extra credit’, no one to blame
CONS

But it ain’t all pretty...
...the cons of using the flipped syllabus:

-Cultural lag: students have been trained to behave a certain way, and change is sometimes difficult

-Many students will procrastinate, and this system does not allow for that

-Constant reminders and reinforcing are not just desirable, but almost required (which does become time intensive, and can irritate good students)
ETC
What we have learned, how we are adapting

-A ‘contract’ approach will be implemented at beginning of semester
-A mandatory ‘quiz’ on the syllabus will be implemented at the beginning of the semester
-Automated reminders about due dates, assignments, and how many points they should have by certain dates
-Instructor/student interactivity is a vital component
-You have to ‘fine tune’ the point values to guide students to build a strong and diverse portfolio
-It’s a lot of work, but student response has been overwhelmingly positive