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## Find me on the other side: the challenges of flipped classroom

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### Why flip?

Flipping a classroom can sometimes seem like a journey to the other side, both to teachers and students, but engaging yourself in unfamiliar context and breaking out of the comfort zone is usually the best way to learn how to cope with unexpected situations that might arise in everyday life. We can easily say that there are many students nowadays who just want to look for answers in the book and get a good grade for it. However, self-learning and student-centered teaching should be more in focus if we want to prove ourselves as educators. Teaching our students how to take responsibility for their choices and how to become autonomous individuals is going to be of prime importance in their lives.

### Being in charge

In short, flipped classroom is the reversal of traditional lecture and homework. Instead of focusing on understanding and remembering in class and doing the hard work of “higher thinking” at home, don’t you think it would be better to do easier stuff at home and focus on interaction, practice, analysis and evaluation at school? School is the place where students can be engaged in group work or pair work, they can do projects or have debates, apply and analyze the material they had discovered at home, while teachers can focus more on those students who have difficulty applying what should be understood.

Let’s take one example: conditionals. Students in the third grade of high school should already be familiar with them. Instead of going through the rules again, the teacher could prepare a presentation that they should analyze at home. Finally, when they get to school, they can focus on:

- traditional grammar practice
- finding a song with examples of conditionals

- answering interesting questions (for example, If you could live anywhere in the world, where would you go and why?, If you had to choose one food you would eat for the rest of your life, what would it be?, etc.)
- discussion and guessing ( If Alexander Fleming hadn't discovered penicillin, ...; If Shakespeare hadn't written all those works of fiction...)
- whatever comes to your mind that might enliven the tedious grammar lesson.

### **Science fiction?**

Some might say that flipped classroom is not applicable in every situation and I believe that it is true. There will always be students who don't care and don't do their homework, those who might not have access to the Internet, groups that are too big to have them organized and work together. That is precisely why teachers have to be prepared to overcome certain obstacles. They need to know how to create or choose the right video, podcast, article or blog (be mindful of the length, the level of your students, the comprehensibility). They need to bear in mind what to do with those students who don't do their share of work at home. Furthermore, they need to know where to share the content (Amber in Jantar, or well-known platforms like Edmodo and EdPuzzle). Students, on the other hand, should be able to see the value of what they are doing, which is why learning goals should always be clear to them. With flipped classroom, content will be available to them at all times: they will be able to pause, stop, reflect. In other words, they will be responsible for trying to understand the content that they will later analyze with their peers.

Sounds complicated? Who says you have to start big? Start small. Flip a lesson, a unit, a class, what you deem necessary. Find one part in the curriculum that creates problems for your students and give this approach a try. After all, isn't experimenting with methods and approaches what teachers do all the time?