

It's Never
Too Late to

Flip!



by Pat Semple

As the upper school librarian

at the Bullis School in Potomac, Md., a northwest suburb of Washington, D.C., I'm viewed as a valued resource by teachers who are preparing to embark on research projects with their students.

Unfortunately, I don't have the luxury of spending more than a single class period with students, so it is important that I use the time well. Toward that end, I have developed a set of tools that allows me to optimize my time with them by "flipping" what are traditionally viewed as classroom tasks (lectures) with what are traditionally viewed as homework tasks (researching and writing). I give them information about conducting library research before we ever meet, and I use the time in the classroom to help them digest and use that information to complete their work. A great deal of flipped learning is occurring in classrooms, but it's clear to me that the library or media center is a perfect place for flipping. (See the sidebar on p. 10 for more information on flipped learning.)

THE FLIPPED LEARNING NETWORK



Kari M. Arfstrom
Executive Director of Flipped Learning Network

Providing a national network for emerging and established flipped educators was important to Jonathan Bergmann and Aaron Sams, the pioneers of this growing educational ideology. Thus, the Flipped Learning Network (FLN) was formed in early 2012. The mission for this new nonprofit is to provide educators with the knowledge, skills, and resources to successfully implement flipped learning.

The goals of the FLN are to provide professional learning opportunities on flipped learning; to conduct, collaborate, and disseminate relevant research on flipped learning; and to act as the clearinghouse for distributing best and promising practices for current and future flipped educators.

Educators, including teachers, media specialists, and administrators, in K-12 and higher education are encouraged to join Ning, a free online community of learning. With more than 50 groups to join, including one for librarians, users will find peer assistance on a variety of related topics. Questions can also be posted in the discussion forums. Sample videos can be posted and viewed. More than 10,000 flipped educators have already joined and actively participating in this free forum.

The FLN is hosting the 2012-2013 Flipped Learning Network Webinar Series, which started last October. The series, called The Many Subjects of Flipped Learning, is free and comprises eight subject-specific webinars, continuing until May. Past events are archived. Topics include English/language arts, math, foreign languages, science, administrator's role and PD, social studies/history, and elementary grades.

The FLN also invites you to attend the Annual Flipped Conference June 17-19, 2013, in Stillwater, Minn., a charming suburban town on the St. Croix River, about 30 minutes from the Minneapolis-St. Paul airport. The Monday preconference is an all-day, hands-on training workshop to learn how to capture video lectures. The 2-day conference will immerse practitioners in the pedagogy of flipped learning with three plenary sessions and dozens of concurrent sessions to pick from.

For more information about the Flipped Learning Network and any of the programs listed above, visit www.flippedlearning.org or contact Kari Arfstrom at kari@flippedlearning.org.

While assignments vary, and, therefore, so do my presentations, I typically have no more than 50 minutes to lay out everything to students. Still, I always try to cover all of the following: how to locate encyclopedias and books on their topics, how to construct effective search expressions, which databases to use, where to find copyright-free images for multimedia presentations, how to power search in Google for primary source documents and authoritative sources, and how to use our citation software (NoodleTools) to generate an acceptable MLA-style works cited page. How do I do this, plus leave time for students to log on and start researching? I lay groundwork ahead of time and leave them with loads of online help for the days that lie ahead. Throw into the mix the fact that I often have new students in the class, or a handful are on a field trip or out sick, and the benefits of flipping the presentation become even more apparent.

I have found that by relegating the nuts and bolts of the library to videos, project pages (webpages), and screen shots, I can use my limited time more efficiently with students because I am freed up to give them help that is personalized to their assignment and their topic.

Having spent the past few years as both middle school and upper school librarian, I have been invited into a wide variety of classrooms—not only English, history, geography, math, biology, and chemistry but also the more atypical classes of psychology, Latin, Spanish, and even choir. Working with each teacher, I create a project webpage, which is an online pathfinder (“pathfinders” being what we used to call the printed handout that would guide patrons to the library resources on a given topic). Many libraries use LibGuides (<http://springshare.com/libguides>) to create online pathfinders, but a while ago, I

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TIPS AND HOW-TO'S

- Off-load the teaching of library skills: There is no getting around the fact that students need to know their way around the library and the various databases if they want to be successful. It's important that I be the one to teach that, but it's inefficient for me to repeatedly explain classification schemes, Boolean searching, and setting up their MLA works cited page in NoodleTools. If I have six or seven classes of 10th-grade history students, it is far better that I teach those things once through a screen cast (lecture capture) or with a webpage that they view at home ahead of time and, instead, spend my limited time in class providing one-on-one or small-group help. For example, I used to have to spend time explaining how to decipher the index entry of our science encyclopedias when preparing chemistry students for their Founding Fathers of Chemistry project. Now, thanks to a simple graphic that I've put online for students to review as needed, I can spend my time addressing the more important issue of why using entries in print encyclopedias published by credentialed teams of editors is usually a safer bet than using Wikipedia's articles (see the graphic in Figure 1 and online at http://ecbiz108.inmotionhosting.com/~ineed5/_chemistry_10_bones_founding_fathers.html).

Similarly, rather than take up valuable class time explaining the finer points about conducting an advanced search in a particular database that some of them may already know, or some of them won't need to know, why not take some screen shots and put them on a webpage for students to view as needed? (See Figure 2 and online at http://ecbiz108.inmotionhosting.com/~ineedg5/jstor_advanced_search.html.)



Project Page for Chemistry 10, Ms. Bones:
Library Resources for "Founding Fathers of Chemistry" Project
 Mrs. Sempie, Librarian
 301-983-5721
 pat_sempie@bullis.org

Marriott Family Library, Bullis School > **Mrs. Sempie's Teacher Page** > **Project Page for Ms. Bones, Chemistry 10**

2011 Feb. 14: Students, don't forget to review the login and password with Ms. Bones so that you can access these databases from home!

Subscription Databases

Gale Science in Context

As you type in the name of a scientist, notice how it helps you by offering options in a drop-down menu:



Gale contains a number of encyclopedias. I should think that the one you will find most helpful: **The New Book of Popular Science**:



Webster's Science

Again, just start typing the name of your scientist:



If you are lucky enough to find an entire unit on your person, be sure to expand the box to see all of the content:



Britannica Online School Edition

Don't overlook the websites and graphics under the heading of "Additional Content" in your results list:



Discovery Education

One of the best things about Discovery Streaming is that it contains a lot of images and video clips:



Print Encyclopedias

Dictionary of Scientific Biography, 26 vol.
 (REF 509.22 D2C) Grab Vol. 15-16 for index of names.

Gale Encyclopedia of Science, 6 vol.
 (REF 509.3)
Modern of Science, 3 vol.
 (REF 509.2)

A reminder about how to decipher the subject headings in an encyclopedia's index:



Websites



To limit your search in Google to reputable websites written by experts, insert one of these "commands" in front of your search terms. This will work with Google Images, too:

site:edu site:gov site:org

Some examples (feel free to copy & paste):

site:edu dmitri mendeleev biography
 site:edu dimitri mendeleev biography
 site:edu aristotle matter
 site:edu aristotle biography
 site:edu niels bohr biography
 site:gov ernest rutherford atom

WIKIPEDIA

And finally this, from Wikipedia's entry on itself, "Wikipedia:About":

"Visitors do not need specialized qualifications to contribute... Because Wikipedia is an ongoing work to which, in principle, anybody can contribute, it differs from a paper-based reference source in important ways. In particular, newer articles more frequently contain significant misinformation, unencyclopedic content, or vandalism. Users need to be aware of this to obtain valid information and avoid misinformation that has been recently added and not yet removed..." (emphasis is added)

Figure 1



The 80/20 rule:

With experienced upper school students, my goal is to spend no more than 20% of the class time

Screen #1: Entering search terms and setting limits.

Put a keyword on each line. Note Boolean operators in drop-down menu.

Start by selecting "Article" and "Editorial." "Review" will return book reviews (usually not helpful), and "Pamphlet" returns some very interesting primary documents.

Limit to: Type: ☒ Article ☐ Review ☒ Editorial ☐ Pamphlet

Date Range: From: To: Language: All Languages

Enter Title: Or Select from Available Disciplines and Title List Discipline(s) and/or Title(s): ☐ African American Studies (15 titles)

Screen #2: The results list, images tab, and saving citations in MyJSTOR.

There are some "great" images in this database.

To save your citations, use MyJSTOR tab to set up personal account. I suggest you use Bulls email name and password.

Screen #3: Viewing document and printing.

To print, select the "PDF" button.

A useful feature...

Figure 2

- The librarian's prime directive—meet their information needs and answer their questions: For me, that means giving them just what they need to complete the assignment, no more and no less. My students are generally not librarians-in-training, so I try to avoid bogging them down with anything beyond exactly what they need; even though I am fascinated by the possibilities of Boolean operators and truncation symbols, they most likely are not. And most of the time they need quick reminders, not full-blown tutorials. For instance, when the English department discovered too late that its books were not going to arrive in time at the school store, I was able to make a 2-minute screen cast showing students how to download the title from our collection of ebooks to their Kindles, tablets, or computers. Experienced students could view it and then turn to the task of downloading; new or less-experienced students could use the pause button to follow my instructions and visuals step by step. The teacher posted the link on his website (we use Haiku), and students were able to have the first chapter read in time for class the next day. Watch the screen cast at http://ecbiz108.inmotionhosting.com/~ineedg5/camtasia/kinder/ragged_dick.html.

- The 80/20 rule: With experienced upper school students, my goal is to spend no more than 20% of the class time talking and 80% of the time letting them research independently while I walk around the room and look over their shoulders, answer questions, and help them craft better search expressions. With middle school students or freshmen and sophomores, my percentage drops to 60/40 or even 50/50. To address the greater need they have for building solid library skills, I created a more polished video on how to cite an article from a print encyclopedia using an online citation software program. Unlike the video mentioned above that was made on-the-fly for a one-time use, for this video I used PowerPoint, wrote out a script, practiced, and made a few edits, knowing that it would have a longer shelf life and be viewed over and over again. Take a look at http://ecbiz108.inmotionhosting.com/~ineedg5/camtasia/noodlebib_mla_starter_03_print_encyclopedia.htm.

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better search expressions. With middle school students or freshmen and sophomores, my percentage drops to 60/40 or even 50/50.

While I don't make videos like that for every class, I do create what I call a "project page" for each class I work with. Everything I reviewed with students in the classroom is repeated on this page, complete with reminders, graphics, and my contact information. You can view a project page for a seventh-grade Spanish class at http://ecbiz108.inmotionhosting.com/~ineedg5/_spanish_1a_spanish_speaking_country_barbieri.html.

A project page for ninth-grade world history students who were using Weebly to create a website specific to a country and a problem related to development can be seen at http://ecbiz108.inmotionhosting.com/~ineedg5/_history_c_hellman_09_dev_world_weebly.html.

And here is one for AP U.S. History students who were using Facebook to create fan pages for their favorite 19th-century reformer: http://ecbiz108.inmotionhosting.com/~ineedg5/_history_apush_romeyn_19th_facebook.html.

- Point of need: Students need the help of the librarian most when they have left school for the day and are sitting at home trying to wade through all the information in our online databases. To help them at this juncture, I will sometimes work with the classroom teacher to pick a strategic date or two for a scheduled online chat session. I will quickly install a chat window on my webpage (Meebo, until it was recently bought by Google) and keep it open for a few hours in the evening, allowing me to help students on a one-to-one basis. Again, that's a better use of my time—let them learn how to look up a book in the catalog by reviewing a screen shot but come to me directly with the more important problems, such as trying to decide whether or not they can cite the manuscript reproduced within the article as a primary source. I've found that a fairly small percentage of the students will actually use the chat box, but those who do are so appreciative that it is clearly worth my time to offer this kind of help.
- Get out of the office and rethink your space: As I walk through the hallways and observe flipped learning

classes, I often see what might be described as chaos. Chairs are not in neat and tidy rows, the teacher is not at the head of the room, and some students are conferring while others work independently. The physical space of a flipped class is different, and consequently, so is the physical space of our library. First, we gave less priority to the storing of books and greater priority to the meeting of minds; by tightening up our shelving, taking a long hard look at some the books that had been languishing on our shelves for years, and increasing the portion of our budget that goes to digital resources, we found that we were able to triple the space devoted to tables and chairs. Second, the two librarians reprioritized their work areas, opting to make the shared office a secondary space and the desks out on the floor our primary spaces. Finally, we are not always a "quiet" library, realizing that the group work and collaboration that comes with a flipped classroom often necessitates animated discussions among students.

As you consider flipping your media center, know that you don't have to do this alone. Work with your colleagues to capture lectures, directions, and assignments in a digital format. Keep them short and sweet. My personal goal is to never go beyond 3 minutes; if I do, odds are that I am covering too much and should break it into two or three discrete screen casts. And while my first videos tended to be more elaborate, I soon decided that my approach was in conflict with my goal of increased efficiency, as the time spent with retakes and editing started to exceed the time I would have spent preparing and presenting an entire lecture on the subject. I've gotten better with practice, and so will you. I've also found that students appreciate having control over their learning. Posting webpages and videos allows them greater control over choosing the time, pace, place, and path of their library instruction. As Jonathan Bergmann and Aaron Sams, authors of *Flip Your Classroom: Reach Every Student in Every Class Every Day* (ISTE/ASCD, 2012), like to say, "Do you need it perfect or by Tuesday?" Go ahead and try, I think you'll find that the effort is well worth it! ■

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