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Flipped Classrooms and Flipped Lessons: What Does It Mean for Parents?

Your child may be at a school where they are using an approach called “flipped classroom” or “flipped lesson.” If so, keep reading to find out more about the concept, and three ways that you can support flipped learning at home.

What is a flipped classroom?

A flipped classroom flips, or reverses, traditional teaching methods. Traditionally, the teacher talks about a topic at school and assigns homework that reinforces that day’s material. In a flipped classroom, the instruction is delivered online, outside of class. Video lectures may be online or may be provided on a DVD or a thumb drive. Some flipped models include communicating with classmates and the teacher via online discussions. The recorded lecture can be paused, rewound, re-watched and forwarded through as needed. Then, class time is spent doing what ordinarily may have been assigned as homework. Class time may also be spent doing exercises, projects, discussions, or other interactive activities that illustrate the concept.

The benefit of the flipped classroom is that teachers have more one-on-one time to help students and explain difficult concepts. If problems are difficult for a student to work through, the teacher is right there to help and explain. If students have questions about the video or online presentation, they can use class time to get questions answered. Recorded lectures work well for students who miss class because of illness, sports, and family vacations.

For families, the flipped lesson model provides 24/7 access to content delivered directly from the teacher. This helps parents support their child in a way that is consistent with the way the teacher is teaching it in school.

How can parents support a flipped classroom?

1. Ensure your child has access to the videos. If you don’t have a fast Internet connection at home, seek other alternatives. Is there a nearby public library or smartphone that could be used? Can your school download the videos to a DVD or to a thumb drive that can be used with your computer? Is there a computer lab at your school that could be used afterschool? Seek your school’s help in getting access to the videos.
2. Encourage your child to rewind and rewatch the video as needed. Encourage your learner to take notes on things that are unclear. Those questions can be answered during class time. If possible, watch the assigned videos with your child. Doing so will help you understand more about what (and how) your child is learning.
3. Provide feedback to your child’s teacher and school about how flipped learning is working for your child and your family. Your insights will be invaluable as one way to evaluate how this new model is working within the school.