Christopher Sowden's Living Document of Moving to a Flipped Model Approach

- What is your original/starting learning environment?

My current learning environment is a classroom that is a computer lab. I teach computer-based courses like Design Animation and Media Arts. So as such my learning environment is well prepared to go to some form of blended learning style. My room houses 30 Windows 7 fairly powerful machines with access to good internet. As such, my courses exist in the digital world at a place called Edmodo. Edmodo is as I describe it, a Facebook-itized Moodle! My students log on to Edmodo and check their notifications for mark updates, and the wall for new assignments and posts. They use the computers to do the work assigned and usually have a F2F lesson about some skills they will need to acquire to complete the task given to them. Basically as it stands, my classroom is so close to going blended it is almost criminal why I haven't. Right now students have access to my course, as I upload material, anywhere where there is an internet or cellular signal. The problem is that much of the content requires some aspect of the Adobe software suite so usually students won't be doing much homework other than at my computer lab. So for me the most logical and time-saving move for me is to move to a flipped classroom model so that students can view my lessons on their own time and save valuable class time for working on the assignments/projects during class time.

- What problems you are trying to address by making this change?

As I alluded to earlier the main problem I will be trying to address is maximizing time for students to utilize the expensive Adobe software suite in class, rather than waste time lecturing and demonstrating how to use tools and elements of the programs we're working with. As well, having my lectures or demos on video will allow students to learn and re-learn as many times they need on whatever item they need help with until they get it. So in a sense my job will be easier and students will be able to get the assistance they need even when I'm busy or not in the room.

- What would you like students to control (Time, place, path, pace)?

I suppose I am giving or would like to give control of the time and place they receive their lessons about programs and theories. I would still control the path and pace of the

course and even the place when they work on their assignments. Essentially, all I want to do is give the students the ability to learn the material outside of class time so that they can maximize lab time for their projects and assignments. So in my opinion I am giving control of the time and place of where they view my lessons and at what times.

- What is the role of the teacher?

The role of the teacher will still be the master in parting knowledge about how to use programs and theories. However, I will also be the guide and/or facilitator as I often am currently because I teach a very project based style. I provide the tools and the knowledge of how to use them. The students are then tasked with creating something with some restrictions and are left to their own devices as to what they will create. I then assist them with issues and sometimes co-learn how to do something when I have never tried that idea. I guess you could say I become like a project manager that oversees the projects at hand and attempt to assist as they struggle with a design issue that may or may not have an easy solution.

- What changes to the physical environment will you make?

My physical environment is really just fine. So the only physical change I would make is the creation of video tutorial databank that I can access and then upload as I progress through the course. I've already got all the technology I need in my classroom already. However, I would invest in some headphones so that students will always have access to my videos with sound at their computers in my class.

- What software or hardware might you use?

I already use Edmodo which I find is great for what I use it for! It has a built in gradebook that students can track their progress and access anywhere. I can post just about anything and attach links. It is great! To record my videos I will probably use Doceri as I can record and draw play-by-play sketches in real time as I am recording my videos. They publish nicely and I can save them and re-edit them if I need to. I would need to have an Ipad to do this plan but I've got some already.

- How will you mix/balance online and F2F modalities?

Unless I am missing the question here, I believe my answer is this. My F2F time will be maximized for questions about content, guiding and assisting in project/assignment

creation, feedback, analysis, and review of critical content. Essentially, I am removing the F2F instruction I normally do when introducing concepts and program demos. I am then moving the instruction and program demonstrations to a video format that is posted online for students to access at their leisure. This way students can access and re-access important instructional information when they need it. I can dedicate my time to being a guide and assistant to the various projects being worked on. I can also provide one-on-one instruction for those that need extra help in learning the content while the others use the videos to learn the content. So again, I move my instruction online and leave my work time in the F2F realm so students can ask me questions and I can spend extra time with those who need it.

- How will the different modalities provide an integrated learning experience?

This system of using instructional videos instead of me talking F2F and then providing class time for assignments and projects will do a couple things for everyone. Firstly, the students who can whiz through the material can do so and move forward faster. Second, the students that need the additional support can get the extra support in learning the content through re-watching the lesson and from my one-on-one F2F help. This way I can accommodate more aspects of my class and not hold back or leave behind as many students (if at all) in the at times educational mire. Doing the instruction this way will also alleviate the issue of students using the computers as distractions whilst I'm talking and failing to listen/learn the content required to effectively complete the next task or project.

As an aside, I realize this method will require a significant time investment to set-up the units in this way, however, this flipped model will also alleviate issues when I am away and the replacement teacher is not skilled in my subject and provide concrete evidence of a unit plan in action to my administration. Finally, I shall call this a living document until such time I complete my plan to move to a flipped model system.