

Geometry Concepts – The Flipped Classroom Parent Guide

Dear Geometry Concepts Parents,

I have the privilege of teaching your child in their Geometry Concepts course this school year. I wanted to let you know about an approach to learning that we are incorporating this year. It is called the flipped classroom. The core concept behind the flipped classroom is that what was traditionally done in the classroom becomes homework, and what was traditionally done at home is done in the classroom. It may seem a little unconventional, but what it transforms the classroom into is incredible!

So what does a flipped classroom look like? The direct instruction or lecture portion of the traditional classroom will become the homework. This will be in the form of watching short videos (approximately 10 minutes long) on the student's iPad that myself or other members of the instructional team have produced. These videos cover, in short form, the information that would have been presented in the traditional lecture setting. While the students watch the video, they are expected to take notes on their own notebook paper, or electronically on a provided note PDF on the iPad. When students come to class the next day we begin with a brief discussion on what they watched in the videos and answer any questions they may have. The rest of the class time will be used for practicing the concepts from the video through problem sets, working with manipulatives, and doing activities intended to enrich the curriculum (i.e. video projects, posters, etc.). By moving the direct instruction portion of the lesson outside of the classroom, it frees up more time in the classroom so that we can interact more with our students and provide more individual help. Students are being assessed each and every day on how they are progressing through the material. We are able to assess student learning through video assessments, daily activities, routine checks for understanding, quizzes, and tests.

Here are some of the benefits to flipped instruction:

1. Students don't need to be in a classroom setting to watch a video on their own. They can pause and rewind whenever they need to review what they heard. They basically have every lesson on-demand and can re-watch as many times as needed.
2. It helps busy students. Many of our students are involved in activities outside of school and often have a hard time getting all their homework done. Students will be able to watch videos ahead of time, or catch-up, at their convenience.
3. In a traditional model, if a student struggled through a homework assignment, they would have only a brief amount of time in class the next day to ask a question, or would need to find additional assistance in resource rooms or after school. With this approach, students are doing the work in the classroom and are able to get their questions answered immediately. It's like receiving the traditional lecture AND a personal tutor the next day!
4. Flipping the instruction helps struggling students. By doing the work in the classroom, I will be able to monitor students more closely. I will be able to identify students quicker that have some misunderstandings or need more individualized instruction.
5. **Learning should be student-centered, not teacher-centered.** Students sometimes struggle with this shift. Focus is no longer on the teacher being the sole source of content, but on the student practicing and producing quality work. There is an additional responsibility placed on the students as well to do their part outside of class.
6. There is more interaction between teacher-student and student-student. Since I won't be spending majority of class time with direct instruction, there is more time for me to answer student questions, work with small groups, remediate concepts, and guide the learning of each student individually. There will also be more emphasis on students working collaboratively with other students to facilitate their learning. They will be able to have more relevant math conversations and tutor each other.

As stated before, **students must take responsibility for advancing their own learning**. Students are no longer allowed to “play school.” Below are a few tips that you and your student can do to make sure they are successful in the flipped classroom:

1. Make sure they are watching the videos outside of class. Are they able to “un-flip” themselves and watch the video in class? Yes. If they have not watched the video from the night before, that will be the first thing they are expected to do when they get to class. Will they be able to watch all the videos and compete all the activities within the class period? Maybe not. They may run out of time before the end of the unit if they try to cram everything into class. Also, if they are not watching the videos outside of class, then they are missing out on the most important part, which is the interaction with their teacher and the other students.
2. Ask to see their “unit checklist.” Each unit the students are provided a checklist that shows suggested completion dates for videos and activities, as well as the dates of any assessments. They are responsible for completing all activities prior to the date of the assessment.
3. Make sure they are taking notes while watching the videos and are distraction free. Watching movies, listening to music, completing other activities, or just letting the video play are not going to help them grasp the concepts in the video. Just as they would in class, they should give their full attention to the lecture.

I am really excited about the flipped class approach model in Geometry Concepts. We have already seen gains between 2-10% on unit assessments within other courses. If you have any additional questions, feel free to contact me.

Thanks,
Jeremey Cryan
Oak Lawn Community High School
Email: jcryan@olchs.org