Flipping the Classroom: Ed-Media 2013 Proposal

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PUBH 800 (Epidemiology) is a face-to-face course offered by the School of Public Health at the University of Saskatchewan. It is a mandatory foundations course, and in the 2012/2013 school year approximately 50 students were enrolled in each term. In previous offerings of this course, the instructor delivered in-class lectures to students and used the very limited time left over or student discussions and applied activities. However, the instructional outcomes of the course also require the students to apply the theory of they learned to solve practical and applied problems on mid-term and final exams. Students often struggled with the transition of applying the theory to practice (particularly during an examination) and the instructor struggled with how to provide students with both the required theory and practical application given the time constraints of their meeting time.

It is because of this dilemma that the researchers decided to explore the efficacy of a concept known as "the flipped classroom" in this course. In this research project, the instructor's lectures were pre-recorded using lecture capture software and made available to students for online viewing in the week before the class met. Students were required to have completed their readings and have viewed the online video lecture before they arrived at class. In-class, the instructor led a brief lecture review, let problem-solving applications, gave the students a weekly quiz (with immediate feedback). Students also gave group presentations in the class time. The research was conducted in a controlled fashion in order to eliminate instructor bias. Surveys were administered to students at three points (pre-term, mid-term, and post-term) to collect data; as well, open-ended interviews were conducted with the course TA's (who had taken the class the previous year in its traditional format). Personal reflections and observations of the instructor and the Instructional Designer were also included as data sources.

This presentation and paper will explore the findings of the research project; more specifically, it will suggest "lessons learned" from this project and best practices for others interested in implementing the flipped classroom approach.