A few weeks ago, the Philadelphia Business Journal examined five transformations in education happening in the region. One of the items was Temple’s flipped classroom concept, which shifts focus from structured lectures to a problem-solving experience where it’s the students are responsible for their own learning outside of the classroom. Class time is used for interactive tasks between the instructor and students based on what they have learned.

Villanova has also adopted this model in its College of Engineering, and the university is applying it a little differently from Temple. The Business Journal caught up with Randy Weinstein, an associate dean in the College of Engineering, about how students are benefiting from a flipped classroom.

**Q&A**

**What are some of the advantages of flipping the classroom at Villanova?**

Students could be tired or have a really hard class before or after mine, or a class across campus. They may not be ready to internalize or use my lesson. The flipped classroom can present in a way that lets them take as long as they need to learn, whereas during a lecture they might have questions they need to ask, and it’s gone. It’s a combo of giving them time flexibility, learning-style flexibility and quick use of information.

**What would you like to see come out of using this model of teaching?**

Our goal is to learn best practices from the literature, learn what works in our community. What we found was it definitely doesn’t make it worse, and it really helps the weaker students who would be in the lower half to lower third of the class.

Temple is using a flipped classroom in its business school. Is it any different for the engineering school at Villanova? I think students that go into engineering are suited for that material. I think you have the ability to get a lot of simple facts out through a flipped classroom. We also have people who are doing this in chemistry and math. It’s starting to creep in to some other areas of study.

**What’s your teaching approach?**

One of the most important things I learned is you have to make students responsible for material. You have to have something that’s graded in one class to make them do the work. I give a quiz every day in the first 10 minutes of class. I get the results instantly. Then I tend to help them work in groups on a particular problem. Then they can start applying the material they just learned and ask questions.

— Dan Norton

**Do the faculty have to teach according to the flipped classroom?**

We do not force faculty to teach in any style. We said this is a good idea, so we said write us a proposal and we were willing to fund other things than the flipped classroom. I think the one key thing is there’s not one definition of a flipped classroom. You can do it in so many different ways.

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