ACS Athens

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An Overview

• Educating learners for their lives as 21st century leaders requires us to create a new education paradigm. At ACS Athens, we have developed Morfosis (Gialamas & Pelonis, 2009) a paradigm grounded on holistic, meaningful, and harmonious educational experiences, guided by ethos.

• The vehicle to implement Morfosis, is the i²Flex (isquareFlex) (Gialamas, 2013), a non-traditional learning methodology that integrates internet-based delivery of content and instruction with faculty-guided, student independent learning, in combination with face-to-face classroom instruction aiming at developing higher order cognitive skills within a learning design framework that is flexible in terms of time, pace, place, and/or mode. This learner-centered type of learning draws on the research and practice of blended learning (Clayton Christensen Institute, 2011; Hopper & Seaman, 2011), and the concept of “flipped classroom” in K-12 across the US and beyond. Ultimately, i²Flex aims at developing students’ 21st century skills, while also helping them successfully prepare for their higher education studies --where a good deal of them is already offered online--, and their future careers.

• Where i²Flex significantly diverts from blended learning, is at the component of independent inquiry which --albeit scaffolded and guided by faculty-- is mandatory in this context, and the flexibility of continuously shaping the relationship between the components of time, pace, place, and mode.

i²Flex and the Flipped Classroom

The Digital Native is experiencing education during a very unique time. Learning with the help of technology and the Internet, becoming independent and flexible learners, will only build on the skills they need to face a rapidly changing world and truly become architects of their own learning. The i²Flex model allows curriculum demands to be met while creating a learning environment whereby students are engaged in higher order skills. To complement this, the use of video lessons, or more popularly known as the flipped classroom, moves the instruction into the individual learning space thereby allowing more time for hands on, collaborative, higher order thinking activities, giving students opportunities to challenge themselves and have greater control. The ability of the flipped classroom to allow this goes hand in hand with the idea behind i²Flex and allowing students to really be the ones to design their own pace.
Beginning from Fall 2013, as part of a school-wide action research endeavor, many i2Flex classes have been piloted at the Middle School and Academy (High School), representing a rich variety of course subjects, authentic settings, and age groups, while at the same time reflecting different degrees of complexity regarding instructional design and technology integration. ACS Athens is deeply conscious that this form of teaching and learning that faculty have been striving to implement, requires substantial change in the school’s culture while at the same time generating shifts in teachers’, administrators’, and students’ roles. As a result, the 25 faculty currently implementing the i2Flex methodology, participate in a series of individual and/or group consultations with the Director for Educational Technology and eLearning. Their courses are been continuously reviewed according to standards developed by the Quality Matters® (2011-2013) research-based, US benchmarks for online course design. In addition, faculty examine a variety of models and discuss issues of instructional design as those specifically apply to their courses, and how these can be transformed into a successful technology enhanced and/or web-supported learning community.

- Indeed, the school thrives on the tremendous possibilities this new education methodology can offer to its learning community. Davis et al. (2007) illustrate among others, the development of new distribution methods to enable equity and access for all students; the provision of high quality content for all students; and, the fact that management structures can begin to shift to support performance-based approaches through data-driven decision-making. Therefore, when applied in a systematic, pedagogically sound way, i2Flex can:

- Students have the ability to “rewind” lessons and master topics from any device and at any time. Free of constraints of time and place.
- Students can access material when absent.
- Opportunity for student led tutoring.
- Students don’t get stuck on homework they don’t “get” with no support.
- Creates a collaborative learning environment.
- Teacher is not standing in front of the classroom for 30-60 minutes; less time spent on class management. In this type of model, research has shown that students are more engaged and less likely to disrupt (Slavin, 1987).
- This method also appeals more to the “Digital Native” (Prensky, 2001).
- Can be used in the event of a teacher’s absence.

References and Additional Resources:


Bergmann, J. (2012). Flip Your Classroom: Talk To Every Student In Every Class Every Day. Author: Jonathan Bergmann, Aaron Sams, Publisher: Inte.


a. help promote and sustain the dynamic equilibrium of all TPACK elements (Mishra and Koehler, 2006),
b. serve as the vehicle for disruptive education in the school,
c. become the bridge between the four-walled, brick-and-mortar classroom and 21st century education, and, last but not least,
d. a. empower ACS Athens students to transform the world as architects of their own learning (per the ACS newly established vision), by linking high quality teaching and high quality courses with the collaborative, networked, information-rich environments that are a hallmark of the information age (Davis, et al., 2007 in Avgerinou, 2013).

References
i²Flex in action

Transforming a F2F course into the i²Flex model

In order to plan effectively for an online course, Instructional Design factors and models can be used while developing the Online Course from Face2Face platform in order to improve delivery, create effective, meaningful lessons, help our students make sense of the information in this new format and make acquisition of knowledge more effective and appealing.
ASSURE

Evaluate & revise
What works? What doesn’t?
Summative evaluation of:
- Instructional delivery
- Media and materials
Revise to improve student outcomes.

Analyze learners
Who is the audience?
- Demographics
  - Pedagogy
  - Andragogy
- General characteristics
- Entry competencies
- Learning styles

Require learner participation
Students will actively engage in:
- Discussion
- Small group activities
- Formative assessment

State objectives
What do students need to learn?
- Learning Outcome Assessment
- Course Rubrics
  - Skill/concept
  - Proficiency/accuracy
  - Conditions of performance

Utilize media, materials
How do instructors use the materials?
- Preview materials
- Prepare environment
- Provide Instruction

Select methods, media, materials
What do instructors need to use for face to face, hybrid and online teaching?
- Select Instructional materials
- Produce new materials
- Repurpose existing materials

Instruction Begins
QM What is Quality Matters?

- A set of standards (Rubric) for the design of online and blended courses
- A peer review process (faculty to faculty) for reviewing and improving online and hybrid courses
- A faculty support tool used by instructional development staff
- A professional development opportunity

QM as an (Inter) National Standard

- More than 800 subscribing institutions
- 47 US states; 6+ countries
- QM has trained more than 25,000+ faculty and instructional design staff
- 4000+ national peer reviewers
- Broad application
  - Higher Education, K12, Educational Publishing, Continuing and Professional Education

QM Looks At Course Design

QM looks at course design with an Online QualityPie that includes:
- Course Design
- Course Delivery
- Course Content
- Institutional Infrastructure
- LMS
- Faculty Readiness
- Student Readiness

QM Rubrics are the Core of QM

- QM has developed rubrics for
  - Higher Education
  - K12 Secondary Education
  - Educational Publishing & CER (for-credit courses)
    - K12 Publisher
    - Higher Education Publisher
  - Continuing and Professional Education (non-credit courses)

QM Common to all QM Rubrics

8 General Standards and Alignment Principle
- Course Overview and Introduction
- Learning Objectives
- Assessment and Measurement
- Resources and Materials
- Learner Interaction and Engagement
- Course Technology
- Learner Support
- Accessibility

If you are a mature, self-motivated student with an interest in art, architecture, design, history, philosophy — and if you like to travel, read on:

This course combines an on-line learning experience with a rich field study experience in Athens and at Classical and Byzantine sites on the Greek mainland, the Peloponnese and the island of Aegina. The course provides an opportunity for an international group of students to research and study firsthand how the Greeks of the Classical and Medieval/Byzantine eras expressed their vision of what it means to be human. This program is drawn from work done in the Carnegie Award winning ACS Athens honors-Humanities program.

Cost: 1800 euro**
Includes:
* On-line and field study instruction by experienced ACS Athens faculty and IIC Fellows
* Travel, transport and hotel (with breakfast) in Greece**
* Certified lifeguard for all beach excursions.
* Museum/ Site/ Theater entrance fees

Field study experience:
June—July, 2015
Tour the ancient center of Athens, the Acropolis, the New Acropolis Museum, the National Archaeological Museum. Take a Byzantine walk through downtown Athens, with side trips to the Byzantine Museum and the Benaki Museum of Islamic Art. Prepare to be amazed during visits to the monasteries of Kaisariani and Daphni - you won’t believe you are still in Athens! Take in a theater performance at the ancient theater at Epidaurus or the Theater of Herod Atticus at the foot of the Acropolis. Visit the magical preconics of Delphi, Olympia and Mystras. Construct a great triangle by exploring the temples at Sounion and on Aegina.
Participate in a two-week long Socratic dialogue with your instructors and fellow students. Enjoy summer life in the city and in the Greek countryside. Swim in the Aegean; eat great Greek food; sing and dance and tell epic tales. Document your experience in a field study notebook.

Online learning:
February—June, 2015
Collaborate with your instructors and fellow students to build a learning community and to create a rich context for your field study experience in Greece. Complete selected readings. View online videos. Participate in online discussion groups. Explore selected websites related to the field study portion of the course. Learn to organize a field study notebook and develop a working vocabulary of terms relevant to the field study.

Culminating activities to earn credit
by September 1, 2014
Submit an electronic portfolio drawn from your on-line and field study workbook. Submit a creative project that expresses your learning and communicates your experience.

Course credit
(1 1/2 ACS Athens credit recorded on the transcript)

To request an application, contact Ms. Marilena Garlas, garlasm@acs.gr or at 210-699-9300, ext. 302.
For more information about this unique opportunity please contact Dr. Steve Medeiros, Dean, Institute for Innovation at ACS Athens, or call +30 210 6993900, ext. 302.

The Institute for Innovation and Creativity is an initiative of the American Community Schools of Athens.