

Some schools reversing lectures and homework



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Steven Erdelyi, head of school at Solomon Schechter Academy, speaks with Grade 4 students, clockwise from back left: Alexis Cohen, Sean Liquornik, Ariel Nathan, Andie Berbrier, Alexandra Greenspoon and Kate Lisbona at the private school in Montreal Tuesday August 25, 2015. *JOHN MAHONEY / MONTREAL GAZETTE*

A flipped classroom might conjure images of upended desks and chairs, but it's not the furniture that gets flipped. Rather, it's a technology-driven teaching method named for the way in which it reverses, or flips, classroom lecture and homework exercises so that the lecture becomes homework and class time is used for practice.

It's a relatively new concept in education, explained Steven Erdelyi, head of school at Solomon Schechter Academy. It is in place in other schools across Canada and is being piloted this year at the Côte-St-Luc Rd. school in some subjects with some teachers.

Instead of teaching a lesson during class and giving students an assignment to do at home, instructors make brief videos in which they are filmed teaching the lesson. The videos are uploaded onto a school website, or even YouTube — and viewed by students on computers as homework.

Some might grasp the concept on the first pass, he explained — and others might watch it again. They do the homework assignment the following day in school in the presence of the teacher and an assistant.

“They assign the homework and give the kids some time in class to start working on it so the teacher can see if kids are having trouble,” Erdelyi said.

One reason to flip the classroom is to lessen the load of homework on the child and the family, he said. Another is that the model gives students opportunity to learn at their own pace.

“Not every child learns the same way or at the same pace,” he said — and the main goal in education today is to try to personalize it for each child.

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“We are trying to do more things with online technology to try to make the homework more interesting,” he said. “Integrating technology into the teaching program also helps students to want to learn.”

According to a 2010 report on homework for Quebec’s education ministry by the Conseil supérieur de l’éducation, about 30 per cent of school administrators participating in a survey in 2008 said their schools had started to apply “innovative approaches in homework practices.”

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