



TECHNOLOGY AND FLIPPED LEARNING: A Perfect Match at MEF University

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MEF University is the world's first higher education institution that is totally dedicated to the Flipped Learning approach. This means that every course on all five faculties is provided in its entirety based on this approach.

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ACCORDING TO ERIC MAZUR, A PHYSICS PROFESSOR at Harvard University, Flipped Learning can be defined as a two-step process. During the first step, students go through a “knowledge transfer” period, which takes place prior to class: students must watch course videos, read supporting materials – provided by the professor – and get acquainted with class content before entering the classroom.

The second step consists of a dynamic, interactive face-to-face lesson where the professor guides students as they apply concepts and creatively engage in the subject matter they studied prior to class. This allows students to internalize and develop their knowledge. To learn more, read our interview with Flipped Learning pioneer, Jonathan Bergmann.

MEF University was established in 2012 by the İbrahim Arıkan Foundation for Supporting Education and Scientific Research. After more than 45 years of success with the MEF Educational Institutions, Turkish entrepreneur İbrahim Arıkan opened the doors to his first institution of higher education. Since opening to students in 2014, MEF University is now looking forward to graduating its first cohort of students in the summer of 2018.



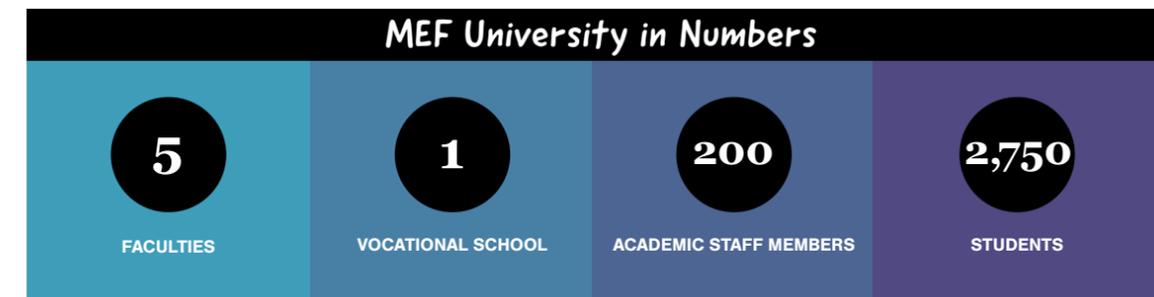
From its inception, MEF University has been using technology to successfully support their Flipped Learning approach. **“We need to share with students large pieces of content, create tests and assignments, and also allow instructors to communicate with their pupils through discussion boards and other collaborative media. We also wanted to work with a platform that was reliable and had a proven track record. That is why we chose to work with Blackboard Learn,”** explains Dinçer Özoran, educational technologies coordinator at MEF University. Özoran presented MEF’s story at the TLC 2018, held in Manchester (UK), earlier this year.

Blackboard also supported MEF with the seamless integration various publishers’ digital platforms, each with adaptive learning capabilities. These platforms contain text, videos, animations, interactive quizzes, assessments and self-learning activities, all of which can be integrated into the flipped learning approach.

“The easy integration of this content with Blackboard Learn makes the navigation more fluid. We don’t need to manually perform many technical operations for all of those files to work – it is automated. This is what makes it possible for us to focus on our expertise – education,” Özoran adds.



PHOTOS: Students at MEF University



Flipped Learning Makes Students Work Harder – And They Appreciate It

Although MEF University is a young institution, it’s already possible to observe some of the advantages of the Flipped Learning model among its students. Student satisfaction surveys run over the first three years showed, on average, 70 to 80 percent of students are happy with the flipped learning approach. Furthermore, Özoran shares some of his perceptions, based on his conversations with MEF students.

“Most of them feel they work harder than their peers in other universities, since they have to study the content before going to class. However, they really appreciate this, because they feel they are learning more in the process,” Özoran explains.

According to him, around 80 percent of students feel this way – the other 20 percent would rather work less to get their degree more easily. He adds: “As we say to high school students when we do our MEF presentations around the community, if you think you just need to work hard to get in the university and then you can relax, MEF might not be the place for you.”

Companies have also noticed MEF students’ work ethic. **“I have heard compliments from people at companies who are working**

with MEF’s students as interns, saying our second grade students are more qualified than some of the other universities graduates,” Özoran proudly reveals.

For Özoran, the use of technology is essential for student success in general, and for MEF University’s students’ success as well. “We know that educational institutions are often very conservative and embrace change at a slower pace. However, considering the way technology is changing the world, the best strategy for education is to think how it can help our institution and our students achieve their goals. This is what we are trying to do at MEF,” Özoran concludes.

Learn More About Flipped Learning with MEF’s Book

MEF’s book ‘The Flipped Approach to Higher Education: Designing Universities for Today’s Knowledge Economies and Societies’ was published by Emerald Publishing in November 2016. In the book, MEF University’s Rector, Professor Muhammed Sahin, and the Director of the Center for Excellence in Learning and Teaching, Dr. Caroline Fell Kurban, address the socio-economic and socio-technical nature of today’s world and how this impacts what is needed from the education sector, outlining how and why MEF adopted Flipped Learning as the transformative approach required to meet these needs.

SOURCE

¹ Flipped Learning. (n.d.). Retrieved May 02, 2018, from <http://www.mef.edu.tr/en/flipped-learning>.