**Name of example:** University of Virginia (UVA) School of Law Contracts Course

**URLs:***Original Article* [**http://www.law.virginia.edu/html/alumni/uvalawyer/f12/flipped.htm**](http://www.law.virginia.edu/html/alumni/uvalawyer/f12/flipped.htm)

*Blog/News Report*

[**http://lawprofessors.typepad.com/legal\_skills/2013/01/an-innovative-contracts-course-at-uva.html**](http://lawprofessors.typepad.com/legal_skills/2013/01/an-innovative-contracts-course-at-uva.html)

**Educational level:** Higher education,Graduate level (law school)

**Curriculum/discipline addressed:** Law – particularly a Contracts course (with 30 students enrolled), although the article references that the professor is planning to apply the flipped model to his larger class, Employment Law (which enrolls 100 students).

**Learning goals:** Promoting deeper learning for students by providing more experiential learning opportunities. Promoting active participation for students in the learning process, rather than merely serving as observers. Helping students to develop the capacity for self-reflection in order to produce lifelong learners.

**Learning processes:** Theprofessor (Rip Verkerke) pre-recorded lectures which students watched outside of class. In class, students participated in problem-solving exercises, small-group discussions, and discussions that centered on clarifying nuances of and confusions about material presented in the videos. For example, students take quizzes throughout the semester, both inside and outside of class. Outside of class, quizzes mostly include true/false or multiple-choice items, but also include one final question that asks: “What aspect(s) of the materials in this module did you find the most difficult or confusing?” Based on student responses to the quizzes, Verkerke “re-works” the next class lecture. In this way, Verkerke adjusts the content of the class sessions to reflect the understanding of the students, including clarifying any misunderstandings. Inside class sessions, quizzes are used to gauge student understanding of particular concepts, and also as a launching point for student discussion. Final grades are determined by performance on multiple assignments instead of a final exam. These final grades are a compilation of measured student performance on quizzes, simulations, in-class exercises, and other written assignments. Students complete a “final learning portfolio” in which they collect evidence and examples of their learning during the semester. Students also write an essay that details the scope and quality of the information they have learned and incorporates personal reflections on their development through the course.

**Digital tools and resources used:**

**Canvas** (for course management): [**https://canvas.instructure.com/**](https://canvas.instructure.com/) **(free)**

**Learning Catalytics** (for in-class surveys & quizzes): [**https://learningcatalytics.com/**](https://learningcatalytics.com/) **(30-day free trial,** special pricing for higher education from Pearson)

**Panopto** (for recording lectures): [**http://www.panopto.com/**](http://www.panopto.com/) **(30-day free trial)**

**Piazza** (for online discussions): [**https://piazza.com/**](https://piazza.com/) **(free)**

**Similarities/differences to other flipped/inverted examples:** Originally, this case appeared to be structured similarly to Bergmann and Sams’ traditional flipped model. Verkerke was pre-recording lectures and asking students to review them prior to class. In-class time was reserved for meaningful activities to enhance students’ learning processes. Where this example differs from Bergmann and Sams’ model is that Verkerke also employs team-based peer instruction inside the classroom. Though the articles did not focus on this aspect of the model, this peer instruction may play an important role in the success of the class. Peer instruction seems to be a well-documented, research-based practice for enhancing student learning. By employing this strategy in his classroom, Verkerke may be seeing positive results, not just from the flipped approach, but also from the peer instruction. The team-based peer instruction may reinforce the learner-centeredness of Bergmann and Sams’ model, but also may help the participating students’ learning to be more comprehensive than just learning from the videos and the teacher.

**Other relevant information:**

The following web links do not directly refer to the UVA example described above. However, they each provide additional information for professors who teach law courses about how they might incorporate new teaching and learning procedures/practices, including flipped learning models.

* [**http://legaledweb.com/**](http://legaledweb.com/)(This website is an online resource for law professors and law students. It contains videos on law concepts as well as information for professors who are considering moving to a flipped model – and why they should.)
* [**http://legaledweb.com/online-learning/**](http://legaledweb.com/online-learning/)(This page of the LegalEd website contains information on the differences between online *distance* learning and blended or hybrid learning.)
* [**http://bestpracticeslegaled.albanylawblogs.org/**](http://bestpracticeslegaled.albanylawblogs.org/) (This is a blog-based resource for best practices in teaching law students. Included is a link to a webinar on Flipping the Law Classroom, which included additional links to the LegalEd website listed above.)
* [**http://legaledweb.com/blog/2013/8/27/flipping-the-law-school-classroom**](http://legaledweb.com/blog/2013/8/27/flipping-the-law-school-classroom) (Blog post about flipping the law classroom that includes specific references that permits readers to understand what the educators did *in the* (flipped) *classroom.*)

**Comments/reflections:** What I find interesting about this example is the support that Verkerke has to implement this approach. In 2012, UVA distributed a call for proposals to develop and implement a hybrid course model that uses digital technology in various ways during classroom time (<http://news.virginia.edu/node/19317?id=19317>). The law professor in this example won one of ten $10,000 Hybrid Challenge grants, which helped to fund the implementation of his flipped class. I also think it’s interesting that a flipped model is being considered “hybrid,” which typically refers to (at least in higher education) a course that incorporates a combination of face-to-face and online learning.

Another interesting feature about this case is the real-time pedagogical changes (or so implied by the article) that Verkerke made while the class was in session. The feedback/results from student quizzes informed how Verkerke focused and taught the material – while the class was still in progress. Until reading about this example of flipped learning, I never viewed the flipped model as being sensitive to what students were doing in the moment. I had thought that many of the class materials were prepared in advance or that there can be a bank of activities that an educator could choose from based on students’ learning level. This example seems like a flipped mastery model in the sense that each student’s understanding is dictating the course activities and “lecture” for the next class period. However, there is no evidence to suggest that students are allowed the space to learn at their own pace and conduct *individualized* activities determined by their current level of learning. The activities are very much delivered to the entire class regardless of where each student is in the learning process.

I think the approach used by this professor makes a lot of sense in graduate higher education, where the goal (at least in a professional school) is to produce future professionals who are fully qualified to perform the tasks required of them as part of their intended professional work. Because of the larger number of students in higher education courses, it can be difficult to gauge where individual students are in the learning process. This professor, by using nightly quizzes to inform his approach to the next class’ material, is trying to be sensitive to the students’ learning levels. This may be the best way to implement a flipped approach in higher education that is similar to the flipped mastery model.