

The Internet and the Inverted Classroom

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URL: <http://www.sba.muohio.edu/plattgj/eco201>

One of the cornerstones of our principles of microeconomics course is its Web site. This Web site is one of the main components of “The Inverted Classroom” (Lage, Platt, and Treglia 2000), in which lectures take place outside of class and class time is devoted to group and individual problem solving, discussion, and experiments. The rationale for developing such a class was to allow students to spend class time modeling critical thinking and to develop a classroom environment that reaches students with different learning styles, as discussed in Bartlett (1997) and Becker and Watts (1995, 1996). Although the inverted classroom can be taught without online resources, the Internet allows the instructor to invert the classroom without sacrificing content coverage.

The Web site is divided into four distinct components—the classroom, the desk, the coffee shop, and the library—that map to different real-world student learning environments. The classroom is designed to mirror the resources or experiences that traditionally take place in a lecture classroom, including online lectures and information about videotaped lectures. The desk component maintains the students’ problem sets, experiment debriefings, and personal grade information. The coffee shop is used for communication in bulletin boards, e-mail, and chat forums. Finally, the library contains additional resources for self-directed study, such as links to other online courses, local library resources, and additional Internet resources.

The philosophical foundation of our Web site is that the Internet provides students with an excellent complement, not substitute, to their in-class efforts. The use of the Web in providing core content allows us to use experiments, group work, and other highly interactive in-class pedagogies without sacrificing course content. By integrating the Web as part of a larger program of teaching to different learning styles, we are able to reach a more diverse student population.

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