Turn Flipped Learning into Results: Make Pre-class Preparation Verifiable

A UK Higher Education Leader's Playbook

Summary

When students watch a video before class, but lecturers can't see who watched it, or what they have understood, the follow-up seminars then slide back into re-teaching them.

Instead of applying ideas and deepening their understanding, you end up losing the time you planned for active learning.

Where flipped learning fails

Flipped learning is now becoming increasingly common across UK universities, but its success often depends on one make-or-break step:

The make-or-break step is whether students have engaged with and understood the pre-class videos.

When that step fails, your "active" session becomes a catch-up lecture.

What's changed lately

Hybrid timetables, commuter patterns, and rising workload pressures mean students are more selective about what they do before class.

Short-form video norms have raised expectations: if a clip feels slow, hard to find, or irrelevant, students won't watch it.

At the same time, governors and executive teams increasingly expect leaders to prove learning impact.

Without any proof of this, it becomes difficult for any leader to provide solid evidence.

This is now hurting results. But why?

You end up paying twice for the same learning time: once to create the video, and again to repeat it live.

Staff lose confidence in the flipped model, students stop believing seminars are worth

attending, and results become uneven across modules.

Even worse, you can't see the real issue; it is low viewing, poor understanding, a weak link to class tasks or other access barriers, so fixes become guesswork.

That's risky when budgets are tight, and student experience really matters a lot.

This paper is your practical playbook to prove pre-class engagement, build interactive video preparation, and use simple watch-and-response signals to target support for your students.

This enables flipped learning sessions to deliver on their promise.

Evidence: The Preparation Gap Is Real

In a June 2024 UK university study of a **partial-flipped** learning approach, authors reported variable pre-class engagement, which led to differences in student preparedness.[1]

Put simply: students can skip, delay, or treat even well-designed pre-work as optional.

When that happens, your seminar starts with the basics instead of application, and the strongest students end up compensating for peers who haven't prepared.

Staff then feel forced to recap, which trains students that preparation for seminars is negotiable.

Over time, the flipped model becomes fragile because it depends on trust that you can't verify.

Attendance anxiety drives policy inconsistency:

Leaders restrict recordings in the hope of increasing attendance, just as more students need flexible access beyond the classroom.

Attendance concerns drive the ongoing debate over lecture capture, even as universities need to improve accessibility (including for neurodivergent learners).

Horlin et al. (2023) from the University of Glasgow call recordings an 'inclusive tool for learning' that must remain available.[2]

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[1] Osituyo, O., Malagila, J. K. and Sha'ven, W. B. (2024) 'Partial flipped classroom approach and student engagement in the classroom: evidence from a UK university', *Journal of Education, Innovation and Communication*, 6(1), pp. 58–97.

Archived here (archived 29 Jan 2026)

[2] University of Glasgow researchers, 2023

Their point is clear: recordings are not just convenient; for many learners, they are part of access and inclusion.

EDUCAUSE notes students are “demanding access to learning anytime, anywhere," raising expectations for flexible study patterns (Pelletier et al., 2024).[3]

If your flipped approach relies on pre-class video, restrictive policies widen the gap between those who can keep up and those who can’t.

The end result is the same: uneven readiness, more re-teaching, and a student experience that becomes harder for university leaders to prove its effectiveness.

Initial option 1

Turn Off the Recordings

A common “quick fix” is to restrict or remove recordings and pre-class videos, hoping students will attend and prepare because they have no other option.

Leaders may delay access until after class or ask staff to stop sharing recordings altogether.

It sounds decisive, but it treats a learning-design problem like a discipline problem, which often backfires.

UK researchers argue that lecture recordings serve as an "inclusive tool for learning" and "flexible safety net" for disabled/neurodivergent students who need to pause, replay, and adjust speed.[4]

Removing access would disproportionately harm those who rely on it most.

Initial option 2

Add More Graded Checks

A common fix is to make every pre-class video **mandatory and graded**. You add a short quiz after each clip, attach marks, and use “completion” as the lever.

It can boost click-through rate, but it also turns preparation into a box-ticking exercise and

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SEDA Blog (Staff & Educational Development Association) – Horlin, Hronska & Nordmann's own publication.

Archived here (archived 29 Jan 2026)

[3] Pelletier, K., McCormack, M., Muscanell, N., Reeves, J., Robert, J. and Arbino, N. (2024) *2024 EDUCAUSE Horizon Report: Teaching and Learning Edition*. Boulder, CO: EDUCAUSE.

Archived here (archived 29 Jan 2026)

[4] Horlin, C., Hronska, B. and Nordmann, E. (2023) 'Lecture capture: An inclusive and flexible safety net for all', *SEDA Blog*, 17 May.

Archived here (archived 29 Jan 2026)

adds more assessment pressure.

UK higher education leaders caution against assessment overload amid existing student wellbeing pressures.[5]

Their point is simple: piling on extra checks is not a sustainable strategy.

If your flipped model depends on constant micro-grading, you risk assessment overload, shallow learning, and student burnout, without fixing *why* preparation is not working.

Strategic Approach

Make Preparation Measurable

The real fix is to treat pre-class content as a **preparation system**, not a link you hope students click.

Build short, accessible clips inside the Learning Management System with **tiny in-video prompts** so learners are doing something while they watch the videos.

Then use engagement signals for checking views, drop-off points, replays, and responses, which helps to spot confusion early and then plan for the next class around it.

Unlike switching the recordings off, this keeps the flexibility many students rely on, while still making preparation visible.[6]

Rather than adding more graded checks, it uses light-touch, mostly automated signals, so you avoid assessment overload and extra marking.

It also lets staff intervene with precision: a targeted nudge, a quick clarification at the sticking point, or a better in-class task.

Over time, you will rebuild trust, students realise that preparation matters, and teachers see that seminars remain active.

UK teaching staff report that digital tools like Padlet and Mentimeter enhance student engagement.[7]

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[5] Moss, A. C. and Neves, J. (2025) 'The risks of eroding work and study conditions for students', *Advance HE*, 6 October

Archived here (archived 29 Jan 2026)

[6] Otojanov, R. (2024) 'Improving student engagement using learning analytics', *Advance HE*, 18 October

Archived here (archived 29 Jan 2026)

[7] Jisc (2025) *2024/25 UK higher education teaching staff digital experience insights: Survey findings

Archived here (archived 29 Jan 2026)

Strategic Approach: Addressing the First Major Concern

Keep It Fair for Every Student

Your first concern is fairness: any push for pre-class video must not lock out disabled or neurodivergent students, carers, or commuters who rely on recordings to learn on their own schedule.

The measurable-preparation approach keeps access open but makes learning visible—so you don't need blunt restrictions to drive preparation.

You design videos to be easy to use: short chunks, clear navigation, and accessible formats (captions/transcripts), so more students can engage without extra hassle.

You add light, in-video check-ins that confirm understanding without turning preparation into formal testing.

Then you use engagement signals to identify who is stuck (and where), enabling targeted, timely support and reducing reliance on assumptions.

Researchers warn that you should not respond by removing the recordings, because recordings help disabled and neurodivergent students participate on fairer terms, allowing them to replay, control pace, and reduce their barriers to keeping up.[8]

Strategic Approach: Addressing the Second Major Concern

Reduce Staff Workload

Your second concern is workload. Already overstretched lecturers and learning tech teams will reject any approach that adds more quizzes, marking, chasing up, or administrative tasks.

A measurable-preparation approach keeps checks light and brief.

The platform captures most evidence automatically while students watch.

Instead of adding extra graded tasks, you use a few simple prompts to show who is stuck and where this happened.

That means less guessing, fewer repeat emails, and

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[8] Horlin, C., Hronska, B., & Nordmann, E. (2024). I can be a "normal" student: the role of lecture capture in supporting disabled and neurodivergent students' participation in higher education. *Higher Education

Archived here (archived 29 Jan 2026)

fewer seminars spent re-teaching the same topic.

You also get reusable templates, standard prompts, and clear dashboards, so the approach can scale across modules without needing more staff.

As Advance HE cautions, "There is no obvious reason why we need to assess students more in 2025 than we have done in previous years," so leaders need visible learning signals, not more marking.[9]

Strategic Approach: Addressing the Third Major Concern

Make It Consistent Across the Institution

Your third concern is consistency. In a large, well-funded university, flipped learning often varies by module, lecturer, and department.

Students get a patchy experience, and leaders can't see what's working.

A measurable-preparation approach creates a shared standard without forcing everyone to teach the same way.

You give staff a simple template: short clips, clear structure, one or two in-video check-ins, and a shared definition of "engagement".

You use the same signals everywhere (views, drop-off points, replays, responses), so trends are comparable across modules.

That makes it easier to pinpoint where students need support, scale good practice, and defend investment with evidence for it.

Why argue in meetings when you can see the pattern?

Jisc reports that students want more consistent and inclusive approaches to digital learning.[10]

Standardised pre-class preparation plus shared engagement signals help you deliver that, without reducing flexibility.

Results in Practice

A first-year economics lecturer at a UK university saw attendance fade mid-semester, even as students

[9] Moss, A. C., & Neves, J. (2025) 'The risks of eroding work and study conditions for students', *Advance HE*, 6 October.

Archived here (archived 29 Jan 2026)

[10] Jisc (2025) *2024/25 UK higher education students digital experience insights: Survey findings (summary)

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promised they'd "catch up" with pre-class resources.

Rather than chase them with emails, he added "engagement markers" to the course page: short quizzes, polls, forum prompts and interactive tasks.

He then paired this with attendance records to monitor completion in real time.

The data showed that some students completed tasks promptly, others began delaying work by weeks three and four, and a small group existed only on the enrolment list.

He re-engaged the delaying group, asked student support to reach the "phantom" enrolments, and opened each lecture with a brief engagement snapshot so students could self-check and reset their approach.

Preparation became visible, protecting seminars for application and discussion, not for re-teaching.[11]

Additional Strategic Benefits

Better Class Time

When you can see who prepared, seminars stop turning into a recap.

Students arrive ready to use the ideas, not just hear them again.

That frees you to run better activities, such as case work, debates, problem sets, and quick coaching.

The room feels different. More students speak up, and fewer try to hide.

Staff also feel the flipped approach is worth it, because class time starts working the way it should.

Faster, Smarter Support

Measurable preparation helps you support students before they fall behind.

Instead of guessing who is struggling, you can see clear patterns.

You can spot where most students stop watching, which idea makes them rewatch, and which question they skip.

Then you can fix the real problem with a clearer

[11] Otojanov, R. (2024) 'Improving student engagement using learning analytics', *Advance HE*, 18 October

Archived here (archived 29 Jan 2026)

example, a shorter clip, clear guidance, or a quick reminder before class.

This gives you focused support, not “revise everything” advice.

The result is fewer misunderstandings and less last-minute firefighting later in the term.

Defensible Teaching Decisions

Even in well-funded universities, leaders must justify what they scale, what they stop, and what they invest in next.

Measurable preparation creates a clear evidence trail. You can see which resources students actually use, where understanding breaks down, and which changes improve engagement.

This makes quality improvement realistic, because teams can compare modules using the same simple measures without turning teaching into a box-ticking exercise.

It also supports governance, with shared standards for video design, accessibility, and student expectations.

The Quality Assurance Agency notes that students increasingly demand flexible learning pathways that fit around their schedules, requiring institutions to demonstrate effective engagement and outcomes.[12]

Recommendations and Next Steps

Flipped learning works when preparation is visible. To make that consistent across a university, you need a platform that scales and turns engagement into action.

A well-suited platform standardises video workflows across departments and provides analytics on views, drop-off points, and responses, so teams can spot confusion early and improve teaching.

This keeps delivery practical for staff while giving leaders institution-level insight.

Consider requesting a **20-minute Kaltura platform tour.**

[12] *Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) (n.d./2021) *Flexible Learning Pathways in British Higher Education*.*

Archived here (archived 15 Feb 2026)