

Enhancing Student Engagement through Flipping: A Case Study in Australian History

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IN RECENT YEARS, numerous academic historians have focussed on the ways in which tertiary teaching can best engage students and develop the complex skills of historical thinking.¹ In their publications, authors engaging with the scholarship on learning and teaching urge academics to share their insights and “historicise their own journeys” as teachers. Alan Booth has been at the forefront of this process, encouraging historians to examine how students are experiencing new forms of teaching and how they can be used to foster historical thinking.² This article discusses my attempts to increase student engagement with 100- and 300-level Australian history at Macquarie University (MU) using a blended/flipped delivery mode in the Department of Modern History during 2015.³ It examines students’ responses to this mode of unit delivery and my experience of the shift.

I began to experiment with blended and then flipped delivery unit design in an attempt to respond proactively to a disappointing decline in lecture attendance in Australian history units.⁴ I also wanted to address a reported yet unexamined broader decline in student enrollment in Australian history units at Macquarie, as well

as elsewhere. After examining enrollment data, it became clear that the numbers of students signing up to study Australian history units had not declined over recent years, but lecture attendance certainly had. I began to explore my unit delivery options in 2013 after undertaking training in blended teaching provided by the Learning and Teaching Centre at Macquarie. This became easier when our new Head of Department, Professor Sean Brawley, was appointed in late 2013. Innovative delivery modes were central to his planned experiment to flip our entire department. Not all of my departmental colleagues have flipped their undergraduate units, but most of us participated in a Faculty Partnership Program that encouraged experiment and participation in the flipping process in late 2014.⁵ Brawley continues to encourage his staff to develop their learning and teaching seeking “to systematically increase our understanding of how students learn and academics teach, thus improving practice”.⁶

This article reports on the findings of a learning and teaching project exploring the application of flipped classroom models, funded by Macquarie’s Faculty of Arts. In Semester 1 of 2015, MHIS302: Australian History since 1901 was taught in entirely flipped mode. In Semester 2 of 2015, MHIS114: The World Since 1945—An Australian Perspective was also taught in flipped mode for the first time. The 100-level unit is aimed mostly, but not entirely, at first year students and the 300-level unit for advanced undergraduates.

Scholarship on the impact of flipping in tertiary institutions has been focussed mainly on the sciences rather than the arts.⁷ This article argues that we need a discipline-specific analysis of flipping for history educators and this is my attempt to respond to Lakmal Abeysekera and Phillip Dawson’s claim that “[the flipped classroom approach is under-evaluated, under-theorised and under-researched in general.”⁸ I use their definition of flipping in order to examine student’s experiences of the process. According to their expansive, “lowest common denominator” definition, flipping occurs when unit convenors:

- 1) move most information-transmission teaching out of class
- 2) use class time for learning activities that are active and social, and
- 3) require students to complete pre- and/or post-class activities to fully benefit from in-class work.⁹

The literature suggests that this form of active learning informed by a cognitive constructivist approach with an emphasis on the individual's role in the learning process, rather than passive learning in large groups, produces better learning outcomes through collaborative classroom tasks that are followed up after class to consolidate knowledge.¹⁰ This article reports on my early experiments with flipping and reveals the qualitative experiences of my students who received instruction in this mode throughout 2015. I look forward to being part of a broader and continuing conversation with teachers who have also flipped their units and others who are toying with the prospect (or those who are being forced to flip), as I rethink my unit design in the future.

The debate about the efficacy of flipping has occurred at the same time as a broader debate about a reported decline in the popularity of Australian history amongst university students.¹¹ This is in spite of the fact that Australian history is the most widely taught subject in departments of modern history across Australia. In 2014, only one Australian university offering history courses did not teach at least one subject on Australian history.¹² Many commentators, influenced especially by Anna Clark's findings in *History's Children*, argue that the malaise surrounding Australian history sets in at school as children are taught Australian history repetitively over their primary and secondary years.¹³ Others have suggested that Australian students are seduced by European history because it seems "older" and "more exciting." As Mark Peel once said when he taught Australian history in the 1990s, he felt like he was trying to confront "the dilemma, so often expressed by students, that Australian history is boring because nothing really happened."¹⁴ In the course of my research, I wanted to examine whether flipping had the capacity to increase student engagement with Australian history.

Action-Research Methodology

All the lecture content for MHIS302 and MHIS114 in 2015 was provided online via Macquarie's Learning Management System, iLearn, in video lectures (some of that content is sampled in the **Appendix** and revealed in the video referenced in note 1). These lectures were filmed videos and or podcasts, laid over mixed media. Technological advances have undoubtedly transformed our

teaching in recent years, and Macquarie has been at the forefront of developments with a long and well-regarded reputation as a provider of online, flexible learning for many years. A comprehensive survey of history teaching in 2011 reported that few university teachers used online teaching techniques and most students did not like learning online. Both groups valued staff/student interaction.¹⁵ This article suggests that both teachers and students have become more receptive to online teaching techniques and most embrace the ways it can enhance their face-to-face encounters.¹⁶

My students in both units were asked to watch or listen to lectures, and engage with readings and other learning activities before attending face-to-face seminars (if they were internal students). External students participated in asynchronous discussions online, and content created in the classroom was often shared via the iLearn forums. The key research question driving my project was: “Does the flipped delivery mode actually improve student engagement?” Using student paper surveys delivered in class during Week 8 and Week 13 and a small focus group in Week 13, this article argues that this innovative mode of delivery made a positive impact on student engagement.¹⁷

My survey questions are listed below. Students provided answers on a scale of 1-5, ranging from strongly agree for 1 to strongly disagree for 5.

1. I enjoyed the online work.
2. I completed the relevant online work before every face-to-face session.
3. The online work helped me to prepare for the workshops.
4. What online activities or resources helped improve your learning experience? (Explain)
5. I enjoyed the face-to-face sessions. (Explain)
6. The online work helped me to engage more actively with my peers in the workshops.
7. What changes would you make to improve the delivery of the unit?
8. I have experienced the “flipped classroom” approach before.
9. The videos of the lecturers (introducing key learning points) were clear and helped me to learn.
10. Has this method of delivery increased your engagement with Australian history? (Explain)

MHIS302: Australian History Since 1901

There were two seminars for this unit. Each contained up to forty students and lasted for between ninety minutes to two hours. All face-to-face seminars began with group presentations, which recapped information provided within the online lectures, engaged with their set learning materials, addressed specific seminar questions, and often included sharing information about other resources. Some students used their presentations to conduct quizzes, role-play exercises, and debates to apply and share their new knowledge about the weekly topic. The face-to-face sessions and the lively weekly online forum were capped off with reflection on their learning, which they recorded in their Open University (OU) blog on the unit's iLearn page under each weekly topic.

A large proportion of students taking MHIS302 were/are also completing education degrees with the aim of becoming primary or secondary teachers. Of the seventy-three students who completed the unit in 2015, forty were also education students. Many students, therefore, are keen to practice their new knowledge and to experiment with pedagogical techniques. The unit is also underlined by the discussion of how best to teach Australian history in schools and contextualised by the wide, animated public debate about the uses of history. We focus on the practice of teaching throughout the unit, I deliberately provide students who will become teachers with further resources that they might use in future classrooms, and I concentrate on opportunities for developing and layering knowledge on a weekly basis. Each week, I plead with students to question their assumptions about Australian history and to think about the way in which their own historical consciousness has formed. I want students to learn how to develop empathy in response to the diverse opinions of their peers in the classroom as well as how to read and use a variety of different sources. I hope that the unit fosters a passion for life-long learning and that students go on to use knowledge gained in the classroom to think about their roles as citizens in society more broadly.¹⁸

Eighty-one students initially enrolled in MHIS302 in 2015, and I collected seventy-nine responses in total, cumulated from both weeks' surveys. The data gained from the surveys revealed that most students preferred the shorter, more succinct online lectures rather than two fifty-minute traditional face-to-face lectures. In response to Question

1, sixty-six out of seventy students “strongly agreed” or “agreed” that they enjoyed the online work. For Question 9, seventy-two out of seventy-nine “strongly agreed” or “agreed” that lectures were clear and “helped me to learn.” Many students preferred the flexibility of listening to lectures when it suited them, in their own time:

So much easier to understand and engage with the information through focussed discussion instead of thorough lectures that people would not attend/engage with.

Lectures were a wonderful overview and provided [an] easy way to engage even when faced with busy periods.

Many students appreciated the ability to listen to their lectures and undertake their online activities at their own pace and at a time of their choosing. Students mostly (but by no means always) engaged with the flipped work before coming to class and all preferred the greater time available for discussion and peer group work in the face-to-face sessions. In response to Question 5, all seventy-nine students enjoyed the face-to-face sessions:

Discussions were really interesting and thought-provoking as I got to contribute my thoughts to class discussions and gain insights from other student's contributions.

The lecture material and readings really promoted my active participation and contribution to class activities.

Was a very insightful classroom. Some of the best discussions I've had at uni. Everyone appeared engaged and interested in what they were saying.

I think the greater amount of time is very important as a group we can get into the “nitty-gritty” where a normal tute may only have time to scratch the surface.

They are more engaging, they are often fun and enjoyable. Better facilitated discussion

The class was amazing, fun and full of great ideas etc [sic]

Really good opportunity to discuss—so many opinions. I could have talked for hours more!

2 hour tutorials needed, especially at 300 level. Necessary to be prepared—made me do all the reading.

We learnt so much from these sessions. Even more so dissecting the readings within the lesson.

Great fun and great atmosphere! Really helped me to pick apart and discuss the information.

Many students felt that solidifying their knowledge beforehand allowed for extended discussion in a face-to-face environment. These 300-level students relished the extra class time provided to discuss their reading, learning with their peers and the convenor. There is no doubt in my mind that the flipped classroom helped to construct an effective community of learning.

Students were asked if the flipped delivery mode increased their engagement with Australian history. In response to Question 10, the students who “strongly agreed” and “agreed” numbered sixty-one out of seventy-nine, while eleven remained unsure:

I definitely enjoyed class discussions, made in-class time more effective and productively spent.

I've never really looked to engage with Australian history too much, but this has helped immensely with my understanding and engagement.

It engages me more as an individual learner and was more flexible to meet my needs [and] so in turn my engagement with Australian history.

Before this unit I thought this unit would be boring as in high school it was boring for me however I was so pleasantly surprised!

Great discussions. Students had an opportunity to discuss rather than have the tutor talk the whole time.

It was really engaging and a great forum for all ideas from all viewpoints. It really helped in making Australian history less dry and more interesting and engaging than it is taught in school...It was a more interesting and thrilling experience that challenged a lot of preconceived notions I had about Australian history.

It was a really great class and really easy to engage with.

I really enjoyed it. Especially for how it helps me in the future.

There was an underlying theme of teaching related to this unit, which made it very interesting and relevant.

Longer face-to-face time. Entertaining, relevant class—I think the focus on teaching history was important to me.

Able to confer with other students and challenge my own opinions.

In a focus group at the end of semester, one student stated that she took on the unit because it was the only 300 unit on offer that

semester, but added, “I have a passion for it now and I can’t wait to teach it and to instil that passion to my students. Australian history is pretty cool.”¹⁹ It is not clear, however, if the non-flipped version of the unit might have achieved the same objectives of increasing engagement with Australian history, which perhaps explains the eleven student responses claiming that they remained unsure about the impact of the mode. They perhaps might have been surprised at their interest and levels of engagement, in spite of the delivery mode.

The blog posts that students were required to write immediately after each class were a particularly effective learning tool, encouraging students to reflect on their developing knowledge and skills on a weekly basis (see the **Appendix** for an example from MHIS114). They were asked to pick their best four posts for their final assessment task, and were allowed to edit these before submission at the end of the semester. This tool enabled me to chart students’ learning, their engagement with the material and classroom activities, and how their learning had troubled their assumptions about Australian history. Feedback of this tool was excellent. One student stated, “The OU blogs encouraged reflection, which helped engage me more with my learning.” Another suggested, “Mandatory post-class blogs—helped review work.” I kept these blog posts private. I wanted students to have a space where they could communicate with me alone. This is where I could gauge what they learned, what content needed expansion and clarification, and what individuals thought they needed me to do to enable them to learn more. I also pitched it as a space where quieter students who struggled to have their voice heard in large flipped classes could let me hear what they had to contribute to discussion. I could then draw on their knowledge and reference it in class. I hope that this developed their confidence to speak and to articulate their own ideas within the group.

The intellectual question at the heart of MHIS302 is focussed upon what we mean by and how we understand “national identity.” I want students to think about who has been included and excluded in the national story and what this means for the way we teach and learn about “the nation” in schools and within public debate. I became an Australian citizen in 2013, but I have dual British nationality. I moved to Australia in 2008, but I have spent most of my life in the United Kingdom, where I trained as an historian of Britain. Over many years, I have thought about my own complicated

understanding of national identity and the ways in which national stories are constructed and “nationality” invoked. I bring these ideas and experiences to my teaching of Australian history and I encourage students to think about how they might impact upon our understanding of citizenship and how we can learn to become better citizens. I intend for the classroom to be a transformative learning space, as suggested by Jack Mezirow, where students’ assumptions are troubled.²⁰ The flipped classroom allowed meanings and ideas around nationality and citizenship to be revealed, debated, and discussed in far more productive ways than in shorter traditional tutorials. I think that the flipped classroom, with its emphasis on increased student autonomy over their own learning and critical reflection, has the potential to encourage agentic learning. This is potentially more transformative than traditional passive, large group, teacher-focussed delivery methods. It is my contention that students are better equipped to undertake this form of learning at upper levels.

MHIS114: The World Since 1945—An Australian Perspective

In Semester 2 of 2015, I taught, for the first time, a large first-year unit: MHIS114: The World Since 1945—An Australian Perspective. This unit has been convened by a variety of staff at MQ. More recently, it was taught in Semester 2 of 2014 by Nicholas Irving, who re-designed the unit to focus on students’ acquisition of historical skills rather than content, and the capacity of students to read and think critically. When I took on the unit, my primary aim was to stop students from making “everyday”/ “commonsensical” assumptions about the history of the world since 1945 and to think carefully and analytically about the relationship between the past and the present and about the sources we draw upon to do so.²¹ The focus in assessment and during class time was on the development of historical skills contextualised by broad discussions about world history.

In 2015, 180 students initially enrolled, many of whom were not modern history majors. Numbers dropped after the early weeks, perhaps due to the strict, novel, and complex assessment regime that began on day one in week one. However, I have been informed that many first-year units in the Faculty of Arts experience a 20% drop in enrollments after the first few weeks. The first written assessment was due at the end of week two. Students had to hit the ground

running and late enrollments were not easily incorporated into the unit. In order to do well in this unit, students had to display how they “think historically” by the end of week thirteen. They revealed this in assessment tasks that worked through how they read primary and secondary sources, followed by peer review of their research, culminating in the production of a short research essay.

My re-design of MHIS114 built on Sam Wineburg’s emphasis on fostering historical thinking by using primary sources in the classroom and scaffolded tasks.²² The four face-to-face classes, containing groups of up to forty-five, were structured to allow individuals to develop the skills to read, interpret, and contextualise sources each week. Classes would vary their focus on how one reads primary and secondary sources and then used them to rehearse content knowledge and how one makes arguments about the past. My work was also informed by the 2009 survey on history teaching that revealed the disconnect regarding the value of secondary and primary sources amongst staff and students. Throughout the unit, we looked at the relationship between primary sources and historiographical argument.²³ Within the face-to-face seminars, individuals worked in groups, in pairs, and sometimes on their own. I deliberately varied the structure on a weekly basis in order to appeal to different learning styles and to prevent students and myself becoming bored by the format.

Because I could not rely on most students being committed students of the discipline of modern history, this meant that I revisited academic disciplinary differences in each face-to-face class. I wanted students to be clear about what skills were being assessed as they moved their way through the unit, and why these were demonstrating their developing skills as historians.²⁴

Many students in MHIS114 shared MHIS302 students’ enthusiasm for the flexibility of online lectures that allowed them “to stop and go back.”²⁵ One student enjoyed how they were “able to view lectures over and over again” and could “pause and rewind if I miss a point.” Many preferred the shorter online lectures to longer one-hour lectures because “The online lectures were more focussed and would not go off on tangents...and were much better than two drawn out one-hour lectures.” Students particularly liked the conversational lectures where I engaged in a conversation with an expert in the department on particular subjects, themes, and concepts. One student commented,

“watching lectures and interviews with experts especially broadened my understanding of relevant conceptual issues.”

Other students were much more negative in their responses to the flipped mode. There were more students enrolled in this unit compared with MHIS302, but there were certainly more students who did not warm to the mode. They remained unapologetically wedded to traditional lectures and asked for the unit to be “unflipped”: – “I disagree with the flipped model and would like live lectures.” Some described how they preferred passive forms of learning: “I did not enjoy the flipped classroom I much prefer to go to a lecture and listen that way.”

That said, even if students wanted old-style lectures, most still enjoyed their face-to-face sessions: “I was able to engage much more with the unit, and it was great hearing other perspectives.” Out of 188 responses, 161 “strongly agreed” or “agreed” that they enjoyed the face-to-face classes: “The use of primary sources in class was brilliant.” One stated that the “topics were engaging and helped me to understand the discipline of history more than any previous unit of study.” One strongly agreed with the utility of online work because “it gave a strong basis for discussions etc [*sic*] with peers and because we had all read/watched the same thing, it was interesting/engaging to hear different perspectives.”

One student enjoyed the way the online pre-class work allowed them to “formulate my own questions to ask my peers. It helped me to understand the topics more coherently and it created more of an interesting aspect on the topics.” The longer class time enabled students to more effectively place themselves in “someone else’s shoes’ as they worked their way through multiple forms of evidence and arguments about the past and the way in which they made an impact on present knowledge. As students develop agency and historical empathy, they are better placed to learn more effectively.²⁶

While some students really enjoyed their face-to-face classes, many first-year students and newcomers to university were nervous making contributions. One student who wanted to just listen rather than participate stated, “I’m in my first semester and very unsure of my own ideas and opinions so, much discussion is hard to be involved in.” Another agreed, “I don’t talk much but I enjoy listening to other people’s perspectives on the topics.” Yet another recognised that “not everyone is comfortable talking in front of such a large class.”

Several felt that the class size was too large and this had a negative impact on their capacity to contribute. Some students dominated discussions while others were not confident enough to speak. One felt that the “class was sometimes too big to fully engage” and they “tended to zone out a bit sometimes.” This was in the largest class of almost fifty students. Other scholars have charted the ways in which academic behavioural confidence increases with each year of university study as students take greater responsibility for their learning. It is not surprising, therefore, that those newcomers to university were sometimes overwhelmed by unfamiliar teaching styles.²⁷

Other criticisms of the unit included students feeling like they were being asked to do too much work online before coming to class. One stated, “There’s so much to do online, it’s hard to retain anything,” while another said, “I am a fairly independent learner so I enjoyed learning the content by accessing lectures and readings online, and I felt like a focus on discussion and skills in class increased my engagement in the face-to-face situation.”

Students in MHIS114 started their class with a two-question quiz that tested their knowledge of the reading. Most enjoyed these and feedback from the surveys suggests that they would like a question included on the online lectures to ensure that they had to consume them before coming to class. Some students felt that there was a disconnect between lectures and seminar content. According to one, “sometimes I wouldn’t feel compelled to watch them as I didn’t always feel they were necessary for class.” Students wanted to be quizzed on both and be compelled to do the work. In light of these suggestions, I plan to include a question on the lecture content in future unit offerings.

Did Flipping Actually Increase Student Engagement with Australian History?

In response to Question 10 (see **Figure 1**), the majority of students in both units believed that flipping increased their engagement with Australian history. One student from MHIS114 stated, “I think it did engage me in the understanding of Australian history as I was able to hear a wide range of perspectives.” One strongly agreed with this question and “found myself wanting to offer my opinions based on

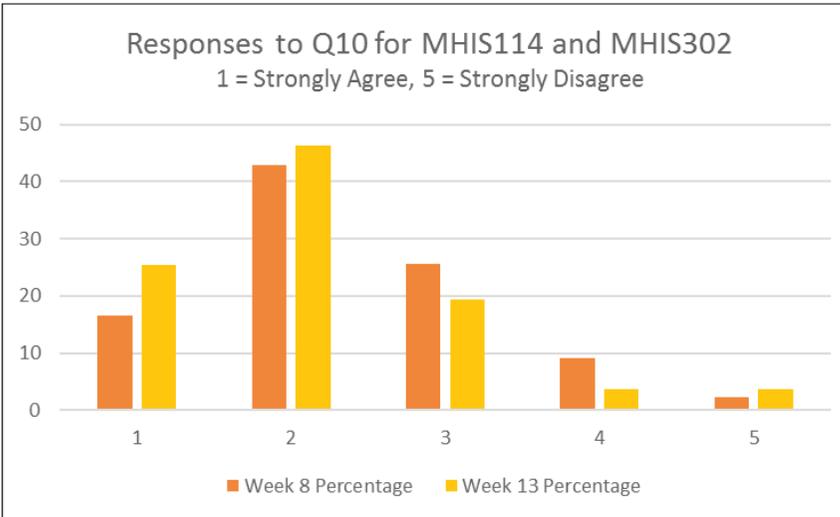


Figure 1: Student Responses to Question 10: Has this method of delivery increased your engagement with Australian history? (Explain)

things I read.” Another believed that their preparation had provided them with relevant background knowledge, affirming, “I needed to participate.” They became engaged because the unit “encouraged a diverse range of differing opinions.”

One stated, “I haven’t done Australian history since school, and I thought that this course gave a much greater understanding than I previously had, particularly politically.” Another celebrated, “I wasn’t engaged at all before, now I am!” One felt that “seminars were good to encourage discussion of ideas. We were encouraged to question our sources, or ‘accepted’ information.” One student who strongly agreed that their engagement increased felt it did so because “placing Australian experiences in the context of global processes was highly engaging; secondly, I felt that the structure of the course allowed us to focus on skills.” Another agreed because “I learnt new stuff that I hadn’t thought of in new perspectives.” Others agreed, “Different perspectives and arguments broadened my outlook”; “I’m from Austria, so many concepts were new to me but I really engaged with Australian history in this unit. Loved it!”; “This unit made Australian history much more interesting than my past learning experiences.”

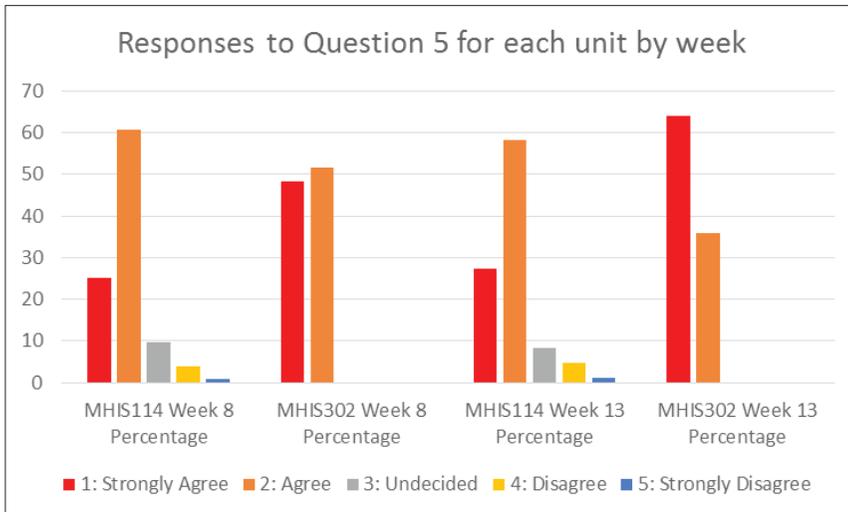


Figure 2: Student Responses to Question 5: I enjoyed the face-to-face sessions. (Explain)

Many believed they became more engaged because face-to-face classes and flipping “allowed for greater engagement with other people’s opinions.” One believed that the “delivery method encouraged engagement far more than lectures, which are very easy to either skip or tune out of. When I know I will be discussing in class I am far more motivated to apply myself and do the readings.” Another felt that they became more engaged because the “flipped classroom assists me in understanding the content more.” Some students continued to question the value of the subject, more so at the 100 level than at the 300 level, and insisted that Australian history remained boring in spite of innovative delivery modes. “I find Australian history extremely dry no matter how it is delivered.”

What struck me most from the data collected for both units was the way in which students appreciated how the classrooms were animated by differing opinions and how this made them learn more. One student appreciated that “it was interesting to see all the different opinions everyone had even though we read the same thing,” with another adding, “It was good to hear other people’s opinions.” The capacity to listen to diverse opinions was mentioned by many students in both cohorts. “Lots of class engagement made it easier to learn.” Another who strongly agreed felt that they

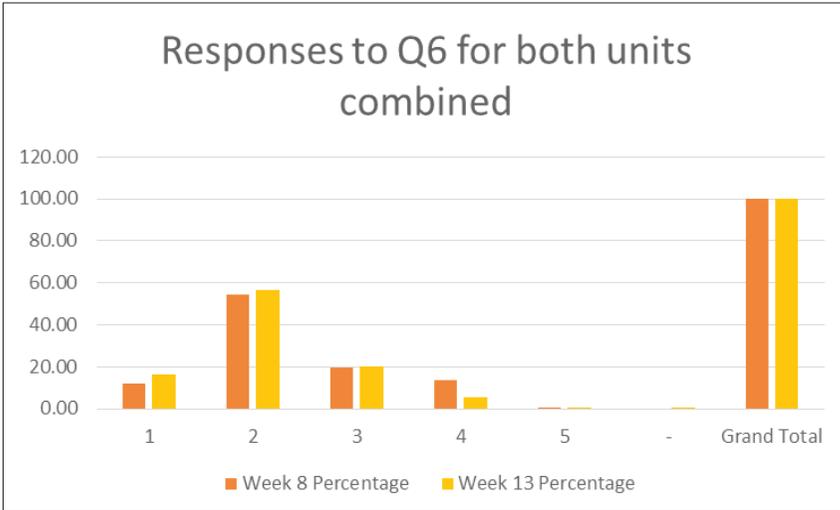


Figure 3: Student Responses to Question 6: The online work helped me to engage more actively with my peers in the workshops.

enjoyed “discussion of opposing ideas.” “I really enjoyed the banter,” claimed one. This student “made a strong connection with a few people in my class that helped me get through.” The longer class time in the flipped classroom undoubtedly allowed more students to participate in discussions because they had less chance of escaping from contributing. This is key to their learning.²⁸ The data seems to suggest that the 300-level students were more positive in their responses to flipping than the 100-level students.

The Teacher Perspective on Flipping

There is no doubt in my mind how time-consuming producing flipped online content has been. I became quicker at recording, editing, and producing video lectures over the course of 2015, but it is important to quantify the many hours spent producing these lectures and much of this labour is invisible to university administrators. Feedback from MHIS302 suggested that students particularly liked the lectures that involved recorded pieces to camera filmed on location by my camera operator/producer husband, commenting, “Loved the videos and watching audio visual sources that were relevant and engaging.” Another student stated that they “Really

enjoyed the online videos—they were informative and engaging. Also great extra links to inform me of topics and this student wanted. I really liked the real footage used and the overall delivery.”

Most students wanted more of these video lectures rather than the more simple audio podcasts that were much quicker for me to make. For example, I filmed a lecture on the Women’s Liberation Movement that began in my kitchen where I reflected on my own journey to feminism. The lecture then moved on location to the streets of Glebe to discuss the history of the Elsie women’s shelter and contemporary debate around domestic violence. We then shifted to a focus on early Women’s Liberation meetings in Glebe Point Road and ended the lecture at the Jessie Street Women’s Library in Ultimo to point students to further resources on feminist history. This lecture took the best part of a day to film and many more hours preparing content, slides, and images.

I have been fortunate in designing my flipped units because my husband works in television and I have borrowed his equipment and labour to make what I think are my most effective lectures. These are the ones that elicit immediate responses from students—grateful e-mails thanking him and me for our efforts, sent late at night after first viewings.²⁹ I was concerned I did not have the technical skills to undertake this work at the beginning of 2015 but I up-skilled rapidly over the following year. My husband has his own work to undertake and although I like to think of us as an effective household-family economy, I cannot rely on his help, free labour, and advice forever. He taught me to use the editing software Final Cut Pro that I use much more quickly now (but not at the frustrating start) to edit all my lectures. Michael Rampe in the Learning and Teaching team at Macquarie then coded these lectures for me using Cultura.³⁰ This makes the video lectures much more manageable files to share and provide for students to access from the unit’s iLearn page. The process did not always run without technical hitches when semester was in session—usually as a result of the student’s poor Internet connection or computer equipment. It is clear to me that there is much invisible labour, undertaken by multiple staff members, involved in flipping units and universities need to effectively fund this labour if they insist on teaching becoming flipped.³¹ Technical support is vital for flipped delivery and it needs to be rapidly responsive.

My experience of teaching MHIS302 and knowledge of how labour-intensive flipping might be urged me to ask for more help from the university's learning and teaching team when I re-designed MHIS114 as a flipped unit for Semester 2. But I needed to act quickly when I requested assistance in filming my lectures. Staff made it clear that there would be multiple demands on their time once semester had started. I also relied upon my generous colleagues for their help filming conversational lectures in their areas of expertise. MHIS114 is a world history course and I wanted to incorporate lecturers with specific areas of expertise. Surveys revealed, as I discussed above, that these conversation lectures were particularly popular amongst the students. Some, but by no means most, of these students were certainly conscious of the labour involved in this form of delivery and appreciated our efforts. As one student stated in the focus group for MHIS302, "I respected the course more because I could see how much more work had gone into it. I could see how much time Tanya had invested in it."³²

Limitations of the Research, Data, and Flipping

The data did not reveal whether students would have reported the same increased engagement in Australian history if they had undertaken a traditional version of the unit. In the four years I have taught MHIS302, it has received very positive feedback. It is possible that lectures twinned with longer classroom times would also have produced increased engagement and excellent learning outcomes. Further research might reveal the different ways in which these students and I as a teacher understand their engagement with Australian history and what impact this has on their learning. Interviews rather than surveys would reveal this data more clearly.³³

It is unlikely that universities will fund their staff to spend more time in large classrooms with their increasing numbers of students when space continues to be a thorn in the sides of universities and costs are being cut. There are limits to the capacities and resources of universities as well as lecturers to meet the needs of increasing numbers of students. After a year of flipped teaching, I have become aware that while flipped classrooms discourage the "sage on the stage" and encourage "leading from behind,"³⁵ a flipped convenor has to work very hard to facilitate a successful learning environment,

especially when we are seeming to “serve” students who increasingly understand themselves as “consumers” of education.³⁵ Managing large groups of students in numerous and varied flipped activities requires enormous investments of time, focus, and energy if each learner is to receive the attention they deserve. This teaching may be enormously rewarding, but it is also exhausting to maintain across two semesters. The flipped classroom has the potential to foster transformative learning, but when students are compelled to become aware and critical of their own and other’s assumptions, there is much invisible and emotional labour involved for convenors in and out of the classroom. University administrators are rushing through flipping reforms in order to cut costs, but they need to acknowledge the extremely high level of resources, technical support, staff time, and efforts required moving forward.

The Benefits: The Potential for Empathic Learning

The experiment convinced me that the longer face-to-face time spent in the classroom, even if undertaken in large groups, has the potential to foster the development of historical empathy and much greater awareness of diverse opinions. The flipped classroom allows for potentially more communicative learning. With longer class times requiring active engagement, students can better understand how our knowledge is shaped and how we can best augment and/or question it. Oral and written reflective tasks are crucial to this process. The longer flipped classroom time helped foster students’ awareness of the social benefits of historical thinking and the transformative impact on their knowledge and understanding of social citizenship. It is no surprise to discover that 300-level students had the confidence and cultural capital to reap the benefits of the flipped classroom more than students new to university. However the agentic emphasis and stress on contribution and reflection in the early years of university life should help foster the skills necessary to edge students towards constructing these potential benefits in later years at university and, if not then, after they graduate.

The creation of historical empathy, which builds upon a range of key learning objectives and skills, has the potential to be a product of the flipped classroom and to produce significant social benefits over the long term. In the increased time that students enjoy in the

classroom, more space is created for the discussion of ideas and the articulation of and engagement with alternative viewpoints. The fifty-minute tutorial allowed for a presentation, tutor-led discussion, and the expression of usually a handful of voices. The large-group format, which also splits into smaller working groups and longer time periods, allows for a variety of activities that can be targeted at a range of favoured learning styles.³⁶

Lifelong learning is key to the success of this project and an emphasis on lifelong learning is crucial to the delivery of MHIS302. At the 300-level, we want our students to be clear about how important their disciplinary knowledge is and how they can use it to better understand their place in the world and the significance of their own contributions to that world. We want them to acknowledge that their graduate capabilities can deliver social and economic benefits to the wider community. An active classroom with a focus on the individual learner's role in that space, as well as at home or traveling to and from university, plays an important role in fostering tolerance at university and elsewhere. There is enormous value in "hearing different viewpoints" in the classroom and using the knowledge gained to develop a "critical national history," which, "along with other forms of history, is essential to critical citizenship, to the capacity of citizens to challenge, dissent, question, and demand".³⁷

In the flipped classroom, tutors should aim for students to acknowledge the different perspectives of class members as well as the historical sources and stories they use to construct their knowledge about the past. The flipped classroom enables them to become more active historical agents as they learn to think historically, place themselves in a specific historical context, and ponder their contribution to society in the future.³⁸ The flipped classroom, enjoyed at home or when transporting to and from campus, in-class discussions, and after-class reflection provide students with the time and space to develop complex higher order thoughts and the space to discuss them widely with their peers and staff in-person and online. The flipped classroom also allows learners to understand the significance of their own role and agency in that process. It is important that students, young and old, appreciate the transformative impact that historical knowledge and thinking can have upon their lives, the ways in which they understand their place in the world, and the importance of becoming autonomous thinkers.³⁹

Notes

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2. Alan Booth, "Making Teaching Public: The Scholarship of Teaching and Learning in History," in *Enhancing Student Learning in History: Perspectives on University History Teaching*, ed. David Ludvigsson (Uppsala, Sweden: Uppsala University, 2012), 19-47, 43; "About Us," *Historians on Teaching*, <<http://www.historiansonteaching.tv/us-2/>>; Alan Booth and Paul Hyland, eds., *History in Higher Education* (Oxford, United Kingdom: Wiley-Blackwell, 1996). See also Peter N. Stearns, Peter Seixas, and Sam Wineburg, eds., *Knowing, Teaching, and Learning History: National and International Perspectives* (New York University Press: New York, 2000).

3. *Ibid.*, 38.

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5. Sean Brawley and Matthew Bailey, 'Is Flipping Worth It? Applying a Value Matrix to Blended Learning', paper delivered at the 12th Annual Conference of the International Society for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning, Melbourne, Australia, October 27-30, 2015.

6. Sean Brawley, "The Internationalisation of the Scholarship of Learning and Teaching," *History Australia* 4, no. 2 (February 2007): 46.1-46.10, 46.1. See also Alan Booth, "Making Teaching Public."

7. Tim Dodd, "University of Adelaide is Phasing Out Lectures," *Australian Financial Review*, 28 June 2015, <<https://www.afr.com/technology/apps/education/university-of-adelaide-is-phasing-out-lectures-20150625-ghxgoz>>; Phillip Dawson, "Will the University of Adelaide's Lecture Phase-out be a Flop?" *The Conversation*, 2 July 2015, <<https://theconversation.com/will-the-university-of-adelaides-lecture-phase-out-be-a-flop-44074>>. Phillip Dawson provides a definition of flipping in Lakmal Abeysekera and Phillip Dawson, "Motivation and Cognitive Load in the Flipped Classroom: Definition, Rationale and a Call for Research," *Higher Education Research & Development* 34, no. 1 (2015): 1-14.
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9. Abeysekera and Dawson, "Motivation," 3.
10. Noora Hamdan, Patrick McKnight, Katherine McKnight, and Kari M. Arfstrom, "A Review of Flipped Learning," Flipped Learning Network, 2013, <https://flippedlearning.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/LitReview_FlippedLearning.pdf>, 4; Eberly Center, "Flipping the Class," Carnegie Mellon University, 2016, <<https://www.cmu.edu/teaching/technology/flippingtheclass/index.html>>; Institute for Teaching and Learning, "Active Learning," The University of Queensland, <<http://www.uq.edu.au/teach/flipped-classroom/active-learning.html>>. On constructivist theories of learning, see Lynne Hunt and Denise Chalmers, eds., *University Teaching in Focus: A Learning-Centred Approach* (Camberwell, Australia: ACER Press, 2012), 7, 10.
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12. Both these surveys analyse the content of modern history units across Australian tertiary institutions: Carly Millar and Mark Peel, "Canons Old and New? The Undergraduate History Curriculum in 2004," *History Australia* 2, no. 1 (2004): 14.1-14.13; and Forrest, Berg, and Pandel, "The End of History," 11.
13. Anna Clark, *History's Children: History Wars in the Classroom* (Sydney, Australia: University of New South Wales Press, 2008); "Studying Australian History," *Saturday Extra* (radio program), 3 March 2012, <<http://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/saturdayextra/history/3864528>>.
14. Mark Peel, "Writing and Teaching National History," *Agora* 33, no. 2 (1998): 15-21, 16. It would be interesting to hear of his experience teaching Australian history in England, where he has been based since 2009.
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16. Sue Bennett, Andrea Bishop, Barney Dalgarno, Jenny Waycott, and Gregor Kennedy, "Implementing Web 2.0 Technologies in Higher Education: A Collective Case Study," *Computers and Education* 59, no. 2 (September 2012): 524-534; Maree Gosper, Janne Malfoy, Jo McKenzie, "Students Experiences and Expectations of Technologies: An Australian Study Designed to Inform Planning

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23. Hughes-Warrington et al., “Historical Thinking in Higher Education,” 33.

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25. Bailey and Brawley’s research identified similar positive responses about flexibility amongst their students, “Is Flipping Worth It?” Forsey et al., “Flipping the Sociology Classroom,” 478.

26. Wineburg, *Historical Thinking*, 91; Nye et al., “Exploring Historical Thinking,” 764.
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28. See also Paul Sendziuk, “If We Build It, Will They Come? Saving the History Tutorial and Rethinking Assessment,” *History Australia* 12, no. 3 (December 2015): 192-206, 203.
29. E-mail from a student, 5 December 2015.
30. Michael has always been incredibly responsive and very helpful. I want to acknowledge his help and knowledge here.
31. See also Bailey and Brawley, “Is Flipping Worth It?” slide presentation on page 8.
32. Focus group conducted by Michelle Arrow with MHIS302 students, June 2015.
33. Ella Kahu, “Framing Student Engagement in Higher Education,” *Studies in Higher Education* 38, no. 5 (2013): 758-773.
34. Helaine W. Marshall, “Three Reasons to Flip Your Classroom,” presentation at the 18th Annual Sloan Consortium International Conference on Online Learning, October 10-12, 2012, Lake Buena Vista, Florida, slideshow available at <<http://www.slideshare.net/lainemarsh/3-reasons-to-flip-tesol-2013-32113>>.
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37. Peel, “Writing and Teaching,” 21.
38. For discussion on the importance of developing historical consciousness in the classroom, see Peter Seixas, “Progress, Presence and Historical Consciousness: Confronting Past, Present and Future in Postmodern Time,” *Paedagogica Historica: International Journal of the History of Education* 48, no. 6 (2012): 859-872, 871.
39. See also Peter Stearns, “Getting Specific about Training in Historical Analysis: A Case Study in World History,” in Peter N. Stearns, Peter Seixas, and Sam Wineburg, eds., *Knowing, Teaching, and Learning History: National and International Perspectives* (New York University Press, New York, 2000), 419-436; Jack Mezirow, “Transformative Learning,” 5-12; and Jack Mezirow, “Transformative Learning as Discourse,” *Journal of Transformative Education* 1, no. 1 (January 2003): 58-63.

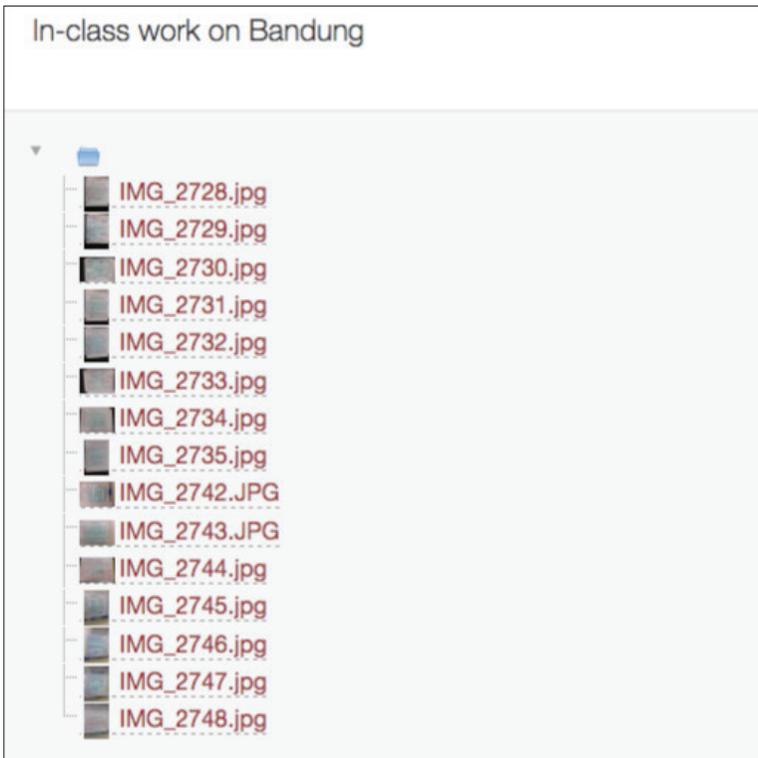
Appendix

Learning and Teaching Materials

“Arts L&T Innovator 2016 - Dr Tanya Evans” uploaded to YouTube by Macquarie University, 14 September 2016, <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8h5ADVYG3Zk>>.

This video describes my flipped teaching practice and was filmed and edited by Lindsey Veaney at Macquarie University after I received a Faculty Learning and Teaching Award. The video reveals screenshots of my assessment tasks, iLearn page, and OU blog posts. I have also included screenshots of the teaching material.

In-class, face-to-face work on large post-it notes on the topic of Bandung was shared with external students via the iLearn page.



Screenshots of iLearn Page

Each week you will be required to complete all of the following tasks in a series of stages:

- o Listen to or watch the lectures provided online before coming to class and/or contributing to online discussions.
- o Participate in real and/or online discussions and a variety of activities before and in class. Please read and follow your detailed instructions carefully. Each week will run differently.
- o You will also need to spend at least 10/15 minutes each week at the end of your seminar on your OU blog . This will become part of your final assessment task.

Arthur Boyd, Landscape with grazing sheep, 1937, held by the National Gallery of Australia

Step 1: Watch my brief introductory lecture for MHIS302.

 [Short introductory lecture to the unit](#)

 [Slides introducing the unit - to be discussed Week 1](#) 135.5KB Powerpoint presentation



Week 1 Reflection

Monday, 3 August 2015, 10:55 AM

by Kate Ferreira

This week has involved the introduction to the course, including a discussion about assessments, expectations and the resources required for the course.

After completing the required readings and lectures, I have reflected upon my learning for this week:

- I have learnt about the requirements of the course, with an emphasis on engaging with the learn forum.
- I have engaged with the material in the reading concerning the national identity of Australia. I found discussion about the 'Americanisation' vs national identity vs historical processes and economic progression particularly interesting as we considered ideologies surrounding the concept of Australia as an independent nation. I am continuing the grapple with forming my own view about the whether Australia has stronger American or British influence.
- I was introduced to the concept of Anderson's imagined communities, which I found very interesting as I considered how a nation is socially constructed rather than an politically bound state. I look forward to further discussions about decolonisation surrounding this.
- I have also been challenged by how social forces such as opportunity, language and race has influence historiography in the past and how we study particular events now. Such as the comparison between studying European history and Japanese/Asia experiences during WWII.
- I have been presented with many new concepts and new material this week which I am looking forward to learning more about and asking many more questions.

10

Week 10: The Women's Liberation Movement



This week we learn about the origins and legacy of Australia's Women's Liberation Movement.

Before coming to class you need to:

1. Watch my introductory lecture.
2. Undertake a word association task and record your choice in your OU blog.
3. Read the chapter by Ann Curthoys and reflect on the ways in which your understanding of the WLM has changed.
4. Watch the 2 short clips on the launch of *The Female Eunuch* and *Cleo* magazine. Reflect on their meanings in your OU blog.

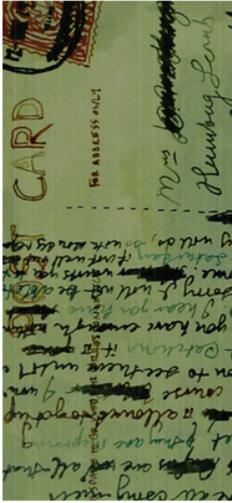
If you are interested in exploring the legacy of other social movements I encourage you to listen to the lecture on the environmental movement.



Step 1: Video Lecture presented by Tanya Evans

 [Watch Video Lecture](#)

11 Week 11: Australia and Multiculturalism



White Australia was one of the foundations of the new commonwealth at the turn of the century. In contrast, in this week, we will consider the social, political and economic legacies of multiculturalism. The idea of multiculturalism was to radically shape late twentieth century Australia. In recent years, much of the optimism has gone out of the idea of multiculturalism, as conservative politics has come to power. We need to consider these issues carefully.

Some conservatives have suggested that multiculturalism undermined what it meant to be "Australian". In 1984, Geoffrey Blainey in particular was concerned that the achievements of Australia would be eroded through diversity. At the end of the century, the concept of multiculturalism was attacked by the politics of the right, in particular by Pauline Hanson and her party "One Nation".

In this week, we will examine the hopes, ideals and realities of multicultural Australia, and explore the issues surrounding this ambitious social plan.

Lara Torc, *These Things Were Given To Me*, c2011, [Nexus Multicultural Arts Centre](http://www.mucacentre.com.au)



Lectures:

Please listen to my short lecture on multiculturalism and also at least one episode of Tim Southphommasane's *Mongrel Nation* broadcast on Radio National in late 2014.



<http://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/mongrelnation/>