REMOTE TEACHING: COMMUNITY

MfA For master teachers of math and science

Joyously Doing Math Together Using Nearpod

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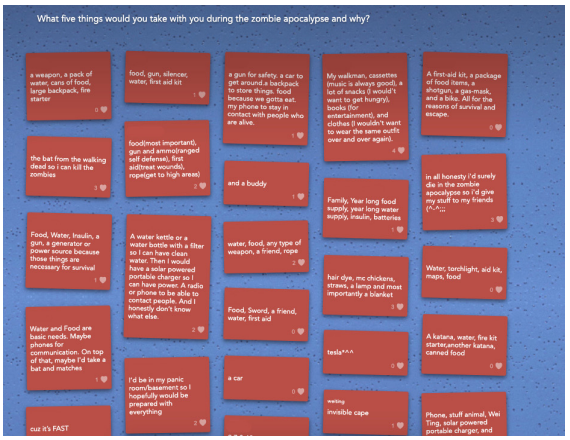
To Soni, one of the biggest issues going remote was continuing to have a place for her students to joyously do math together. She realized early on that engaging in meaningful mathematics tasks together could be a respite from the trauma her students were dealing with.

"We already have a good vibe in my class and I don't want to lose this now, especially because these kids are seniors and they're so close to being done. Most of them are Black and brown. Many have family members who were hit with COVID-19 almost immediately after quarantine began. The amount of trauma that was happening from that very first week…So it was very much like, how do I keep them? How do I keep them so that they keep coming back to my class?"

How did Soni build and maintain a space for students to mutually engage in work in her virtual classroom?

Soni used Nearpod's various features to find the right tool for the right job. Soni set up collaborative boards to start class where students answered questions like, "What three things would you have in case of a zombie apocalypse?" She used the 'draw it' feature so students could show their work and set up matching activities to help her AP students with exam prep. Through these various activities, Soni found that the strongest part of Nearpod was not only the array of features, but that her students were spending time engaging with each other. Because Nearpod allowed Soni to set up the lesson beforehand, she could instead spend her time checking in with students in order to give them real-time feedback around the mathematics. Nearpod even allowed Soni to present students' work to one another to help them maintain a learning-focused community.



Soni used the functionality of Nearpod to set up a 'Do Now' that spurred discussion.

"Just having them focus on something together as a class - whether it was mathy, non mathy - that's kind of what motivated me to get Nearpod into the instruction itself."

Start using Nearpod by following these two pieces of advice:

1. If possible, have two Nearpod screens open while teaching: one that you're managing as a teacher, the other that you're viewing as a student, so that you can see what your kids are seeing at the same time as them, and can help them troubleshoot if necessary. When troubleshooting, also keep in mind that one of the drawbacks of Nearpod is that it doesn't give you a space to conference with a student that you notice is having trouble. Soni used Zoom at the same time as Nearpod so that she could chat with students individually if necessary.
2. Look at the templates from all content areas to get ideas for your own class! A lot of what you want to do has already been built, even if it means adapting an activity from outside your content area.

"The student reports are a great assessment tool. During the lesson, you can have kids explain their work for instance. You can see all their work throughout the lesson, you can then see it again after class."