

Teaching and Assessing Vocabulary Using Flocabulary

David Connelly, MfA Master Teacher

Science, Technology and Research Early College High School at Erasmus

David noticed a loss of engagement with the move to remote - this is completely natural, considering the change from a style of instruction devoted to labs and group work to one consisting of videos and Google slides. Like many others, he put together a lot of resources in order to change things up and try to leverage what is gained from the move to remote - bird cams in his biology class, short PBS videos on the topics he was teaching, and a resource that he found helped him with vocabulary (the bane of many teachers' existence) was Flocabulary.

"The challenge in student discussions was the language usage. It was really difficult to keep the academic rigor level of discussions that high. That's going to be an ongoing challenge."

► How did Flocabulary help David with assessing students remotely?

Flocabulary is a set of videos and instructional activities that use hip hop as a lens for teaching vocabulary across content areas. The videos are short and fun, and the activities allow students to create and analyze their own rhymes. With an integrated assessment system of short quizzes, Flocabulary was one of the many tools David used to help students understand the vocabulary within science as it is used on exams. He even encouraged students to make rhymes for content not covered by Flocabulary!

"It's very good for vocabulary because there are pop tunes and they're funny and creative. What better way to remember things than with rhymes and what not?"

► Start using Flocabulary by following these two pieces of advice:

1. Think of the whole system - just as Flocabulary was one tool that David used, you should think of it supporting the other ways that you are teaching and reaching your students. Flocabulary is even designed to be a part of a system itself - it was created by the designers of Nearpod and many of its lessons are designed to be inserted into Nearpod's interface.
2. Flocabulary was built with many grade levels and content areas in mind. There's a chance that you won't find what you are looking for there, but you will be able to recommend it to the social studies teacher across the virtual hallway!