

FEATURE TEACHER

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What is a challenge you have faced teaching in during a pandemic in 2020?

A big challenge for me was how to continue hands-on learning while not sharing materials and how to encourage student collaboration within a class when not all students were present on the same days. Technology has been key in problem solving how to have collaboration of ideas among students in different settings. Teams of course is an option, but also something as simple as Padlet or Google classroom to share ideas.

How do you support building a positive and safe online learning environment for your students?

Using the appropriate modes of communication like Schoology and Teams is the best way to keep our students safe online.

Do you have a super awesome success story from 2020?

I think having to give feedback on material that was submitted online has increased my ability to really think about what this student really needs to know specifically to move forward. So, having to really be specific with praise and concise about how to improve their work has deepened my understanding of the content and the best way to facilitate their learning of that content.

What do you do to encourage online classroom participation?

I encourage online participation by making the work relevant and rigorous. Students need to see the connections between what we do remote to what we do in the classroom to why it matters in the real world.

Parent Communication... What's working for your families?

Some parents are easier to reach by email or through Schoology message, but I have found that being able to talk to them on the phone gives us a closer relationship. I know, as a parent, I have had several teachers reach out to me over the phone with positive feedback and that really shows how much the teachers care. Teachers are working harder than ever and it is nice to have those personal conversations with parents to share areas in which we are doing well and areas in which we can still improve.

What methods have been effective in teaching during a pandemic?

Relationships, rigor, and relevance are the driving forces. Relationships need to be stronger than ever. Kids need to know we care and that we are here to help them. Rigor is more critical than ever. Teachers are having to address possible learning gaps more while still moving the current curriculum forward. So, having that backwards instructional design in place is crucial. Having to ask ourselves when developing our units: what do I need students to be able to do at the end of this unit, what supports will I need put in

place for students that may struggle, as well as, how can I accelerate the curriculum for students that have mastered this concept? Lastly, relevance is making the students see that what we teach in the classroom applies to the real world. So, making that connection clear is pivotal so students don't misconstrue concepts as "busy work".

Share something positive about teaching in 2020.

2020 has given me lots of areas in which I can grow and learn as an educator. Daily there have been opportunities for research, problem solving, and developing a growth mindset. Also, teachers are collaborating and supporting each other more than we ever have in my opinion. It has been wonderful to experience how staff members are boosting the morale of their colleagues. Students have shared with me that they miss face to face school and really enjoy the days we get to be together. I think it has opened their eyes to how much people need social interactions and it has become something they no longer take for granted.