

MIX IT UP?

As we all know, online learning can be very difficult. As teachers, you want your students to have fun, be creative, and stay engaged throughout your lesson. Virtual learning may have made some of these things difficult for you. You are not alone. Here are some quick and easy ways you can mix things up, grab your students attention, and sprinkle some of the fun back into your classroom.

MUSIC

Play music as your students enter your virtual classroom. Allow students to pick the song for the next day as a reward for participation or staying on task.

MOVEMENT

Brain breaks can and should be used, especially during virtual learning. If students need a break in person then they most definitely need a break from sitting in front of their screens all day long. Encourage your students to stand up, stretch, and shake it out randomly. This should wake them up!

THEME DAYS

Are we ever too old for a good theme day or show & tell? Nope! Once a week, create a theme (or maybe your students can choose!) and have your students dress up or bring an item to talk about to match the theme of the day!

BREATHING

Breathe in, Breathe out. Ah, doesn't that feel good? Practice breathing techniques with your students before starting your lesson or even right smack in the middle of it! This should help them rejuvenate and get in the right head space to kick off your class and learn!

TALKING

I am sure we can all agree that our students are just not talking enough these days. Who would've thought we would ever say that? Give your students the first or last 3 minutes of class to tell a story, make a comment, chat with a friend in a breakout room, or give input on how virtual learning is going for them.

VISUALIZATION

Close your eyes and picture your favorite place. Go ahead, just do it....See...Didn't that feel good? Walk your students through a short visual imagery exercise to get them focused and ready to learn.

VIRTUAL CALMING CORNER

Please feel free to utilize our Virtual Calming Corner. This is a space that was created for students & teachers to help them relax, take a break, and even to get ready to learn. This tool can be used in the beginning, middle, or at the end of your class to help spice things up a bit. You will find tips and tricks to help with visual relaxation, movement and meditation, calming sounds and music, puzzles and games, live animal cams, helpful apps, and even resources that can be found both inside and outside of school. Please give us your feedback!

PS-BRAVO TO YOU ALL FOR MAKING HYBRID AND VIRTUAL LEARNING WORK FOR YOUR STUDENTS!

BUILDING CONNECTIONS

We know that you all are tirelessly working on building connections with your students. We hope that these quick tips might help expand possibilities. As you all know, the single most important tool in educating teens is establishing a meaningful connection with them. Because students continue to struggle when virtual, we wanted to expand the possibilities for creating connections.

LIGHTS, CAMERA, ACTION!!!

What makes us all do something that we are uncomfortable with or that we do not necessarily want to do? INCENTIVES! Let's come up with a plan to reward cameras on! How about 4 days of 90% cameras on and a special treat on Friday? That would make me want to turn my camera on!!!

GET TO KNOW EACH OTHER BETTER

What better way to build connections than to find time to get to know each other a little bit better? How about asking all of your students to send you a baby picture of themselves or a picture of their pet and then sharing those with the class while the students get to play 2 truths and a lie? Do not forget about yourself! I am sure your students would love to see how you looked as a baby or a teen!

STUDENT LOUNGE

TICK TOCK! We know the stress of the ticking clock; HOWEVER....consider taking a few minutes (maybe just 3) to occasionally allow your students time to "hang out". How about creating a "student lounge" breakout room or online forum where your students can go for a few minutes at the end of class? Here, they can just "hang out" & chat...just like the good ol' days. Feel free to reach out to us if you are interested in expanding on this idea.

MINDFULNESS MINUTE

I am sure that you and your students could use a time to slow down and re-connect with yourselves! Please use this link to get ideas of how you can incorporate a mindfulness minute into your class. Ask us for extra ideas!

<https://www.mindfulschools.org/video/i-am-mindful/>

CHOICES

Don't we all love when we get to decide something for ourselves? How about allowing your students to come up with their own "mini-activity". The goal of the assignment ...you ask? To allow students time to share more about themselves and the things they are interested in. We all know that our students are finding it hard to connect with each other in school. Maybe this will help a little!

EXIT TICKET

In our collective efforts to support meaningful connections...consider using an exit ticket at the end of class (maybe once a week or even once a month) that will give your students an opportunity to tell you what is working & what is not working for them regarding virtual/hybrid learning. Feel free to ask us for ideas!

MANY MINDS MAKE LIGHT WORK

We would like to start by saying THANK YOU! Thank you for being there for our students, thank you for taking the time to explore additional techniques, thank you for keeping school fun! Please reach out to us for additional support because....many minds....make light work.

Sincerely, Doug & Ashley