



LEADERSHIP, TECHNOLOGY / APRIL 4, 2018 / AUTHOR: ANGELA CLEVELAND / 0 COMMENTS

# How School Counselors Can Engage Students Through the Use of Nearpod



"I can't do this," I whispered to myself as I stared at my reflection in the old, bulky television strapped down on a sagging, metal cart.

I was holding a tattered VHS tape. It had been eaten and regurgitated countless times by the VCR, which was connected, as if by life support, to the television, with several intertwined red, yellow, and black wires. I had pushed the creaky cart from classroom to classroom year after year to teach school counseling lessons. The tape was old, the machinery was unreliable, and I had yet to find updated DVD-based lessons that addressed my curriculum.

"I *won't* do this," I said to myself.

I put the tape down and turned to my computer. It was 2016. Every classroom in my school was equipped with smartboards. Teachers were using technology to create more engaging and dynamic lessons. Why was I still pushing around a TV/VCR cart on deflated wheels through a crowded hallway to deliver boring lessons?

This moment of frustration inspired me to find a better way to explore options for more meaningful and interactive school counseling lessons. My wish list included something that was web-based (*no more pushing around a cart!*), modern (*no more old VHS tapes!*), and something with interactive elements (*no more one-directional lessons!*). An impossible list? Nope! I found it all and so much more in Nearpod.

Nearpod's motto is "Interactive lessons. Real-time assessment. Across all devices." Nearpod is a popular tool for educators to use with their students, and it definitely transcends the classroom to spice up any presentation in any setting. It's a real gem for school counselors!

Nearpod has basic presentation tools, similar to PowerPoint or Google slides, so it felt like a familiar platform. It also has the ability to easily embed videos (something very important to me), and you can enhance presentations with real-time polls, open answer responses, audience drawings, and more.

Below is a framework for how I organized a lesson plan on conflict resolution geared toward 6th grade students:

- Open the lesson with this fun video of Seuss's "The Zax." This is an entertaining way to demonstrate what happens when two parties don't have conflict resolution skills.
- Define what conflict is and how it happens across all age groups, can be resolved in many different ways, etc.
- Insert Nearpod Poll: *With whom do you have the most conflict?* (parents, siblings, teachers, peers, other). The poll helps students to see that we all deal with conflict in our interactions with others. It's a great way to keep your students engaged.
- Show this video on Active Listening Skills and insert a Nearpod quiz immediately after it ends to review key concepts. The quiz helps you know what information to focus on. For example, I added the question: "The communication blocker 'filtering' means..."

Alternatively, you can show a short video or give a conflict scenario and use the “Open-ended Answer” feature of Nearpod to have students write their own I- Statement. I like the open-ended answer because you can share out some great responses.

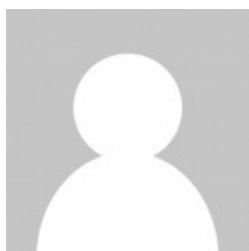
- Closing: Show this video from Kid President and in the “Open-ended Answer,” have students write a hashtag (#) that defines what they learned about the lesson (ex: #ActiveListeningIsKey). You can share out select hashtags as a way to review. I love using the # as a summary of student takeaways. It helps me know what aspects of my school counseling lesson resonated most with students.

Nearpod is truly one of the best presentation tools available today. It has transformed my lessons, streamlined data collection, and helped me connect with ALL of my students. Nearpod is at the heart of what we care about as school counselors. We all want to have engaging, effective lessons and meaningful connections with students. And, as school counselors, we need to collect data to ensure we are meeting our goals. Nearpod supports all of this in a simple, integrated platform that makes my job easier and my lessons more effective and fun!

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