

Daily Journal for Thursday April 30,2020

My day started with my eyeballs popping open at around 5:30. I slowly padded out for coffee, and then went for a run, a new habit I have started during this "crisis". I returned in time for breakfast and went to work posting announcements and the lesson for the day. I grabbed a second cup of coffee before my first Zoom meeting of the day, a weekly leads meeting. After the meeting I took a break, and then returned to start to put together materials for tomorrow, and to respond to emails, and question from my students. My second Zoom meeting of the day was an online class where I assisted students in learning to log in to the online textbook, a resource that I have been slow to adopt until now. From there I worked on lessons and attended my third Zoom meeting, this time as a support for my Science teacher. This is something that as a team we frequently do for each other, as it helps to get students to engage and participate more in the learning. I ended my work day by working with Ms. Jelani, the 6th grade Social Studies teacher, who gave me some tips on using the online text and Google Classroom that greatly streamlined my process, and will help me to better to use the new tools I have been learning.

This experience has both positives and negatives, and good and bad days. The biggest positive has been that I have adopted and used more technology in the past 6 weeks than I probably have in the past 6 years. This is a combination of factors: The need to adapt to the situation is of course a great motivator, but more than that, I have had the time and freedom to experiment in a way that is unlikely to occur again during my career. I have also had time to really interact with some of my students who are unlikely to speak up in class but appreciate the more focused interactions I am able to give them. This has been especially rewarding.

It is not all sunshine and roses, and some days are depressing. I miss the easy interaction I have with students at the beginning and end of my regular classes. Moreover, I miss the kids and socializing with my peers. There are days I am depressed by the large drop in the students I am actively teach. I have time to give more attention to those who participate, because so few do on a regular basis. Effort level is often minimal, and I work hard to give lots of positive feedback and try to provide interesting lessons. But it is hard to compete with video games, Snapchat and Netflix; especially when the students know it does not count toward a grade.

I try to focus on the good I can do now and work on building for the future. The next several weeks will be spent building on new skills and preparing for the time when life returns to normal. I am hoping that my preparations will allow me to come back a better and more efficient teacher. One of the by products of this is that it has helped me to appreciate the value of a better work life balance, something that will keep me happily teaching for a long time to come.

Mark Cable

Santa Maria Middle School

Eighth Grade Social Studies Teacher