

Cep 817 guided me through the process of design in a way I never expected. Coming into this course I thought design meant the dictionary definition: “a plan or drawing produced to show the look and function or workings of a building, garment, or other object before it is built or made” (Simpson, 1928). I had no idea that the Design Thinking Bootleg or the Design Model from Stanford existed. I was not really sure how this course would relate to being a second grade teacher, but boy was I wrong. Out of all the classes I have taken for my graduate degree, I believe that this course was the most influential on my teaching career.

When thinking about my own classroom I knew I had one major problem. I lacked classroom culture. I teach at a fully virtual school and this was my first year leaving a brick and mortar setting. The class size was bigger than usual and the children had so much to say and express but there was no time in the day to fit it all in. I wanted them to feel that we were still a family. I wanted children to feel safe and a sense of belonging, just like they would in a brick and mortar setting. I wanted them to be excited to come to class and make best friends. I wanted them to support and cheer each other on during hard and exciting moments in the day. I wanted us to feel like a family and create a safe, loving and successful environment where they could grow. Even though a screen separated us all, how could I dissolve that screen to bring us together? These were the thoughts that flooded my head from the first day of school. I tried activities here and there, but it was not until this course where I could fully dive into the problem and create a solution.

Once I knew my problem and I realized I needed to talk to kids and other teachers to generate a list of solutions. I use lists everyday in my life. They create a sense of accomplishment. I love crossing things off a list and being motivated to finish a list. It only made sense that for this design process I used a list to get all my thoughts out on paper. Below you will find the list that I created when talking to my younger sister about possible activities one would enjoy in the classroom setting and what some colleagues added too.

- Make an all about video for others to see
  - Comment on each others
- Virtual house tour or room tour video
- Video about family traditions or favorite recipes
- I am in an ice cream themed room so make ice cream scoops and every scoop is a different fact about themselves.
  - Or we could make class sundaes
  - Your favorite \_\_\_\_\_ each child would be a scoop with your name and the answer to the question so build a class sundae
- Have kids post videos of them doing their different hobbies or after school activities and then they can comment
- Have a once a day or week free time where kids can just talk like a real recess or lunch time, make it whole group make it small group make it partners
- Flip grids treasure hunt where kids have to ask questions and get answers
- Make tic tocs with a partner - in person
  - Make a video together
  - Do a fun project together non academic first
  - Switch up partners like online speed dating so they can meet each other

My goal was to create activities for them to be able to talk and interact with each other without me guiding or fully supporting the conversation. In a brick and mortar classroom children know how to go play, make friends, and talk to each other. The

screen made it harder for those relationships to blossom as fast as they do with a brick and mortar environment. I decided to start small, because I was not sure where all this was heading. I remember being nervous, because my class already had a routine. For those of you who know, teaching is all about routines. I was nervous I was going to lose them with a new fun activity, but I really wanted to give them freedom to build relationships and come out with an even better classroom than I started with.

I chose to use the platform Classkick. I designed an activity to entice scholars to pick something from their lives to share about. Then we would share with each other our findings. I wanted the first activity to be easy and have low stakes. I wanted everyone to feel like they could participate. Below you will see the activity I made. You will notice play buttons, because I recorded the directions for those who are still learning how to read. I wanted my activity to be differentiated and useful for everyone in the classroom.

# Let's Learn About Eachother!

Directions-

1:10



Click this



Your room

0:02



Your favorite place in your home

0:04



Something that is special to you

0:04



Your favorite toy

0:03



Something that you have made

0:03



Something that represents you or your family

0:05



Through the design process I learned how to change my design to be even better. After I gave it a shot and received feedback a whole new world opened for me. I was able to learn so many new ideas and possibilities for a simple activity to use in my classroom. It was exciting to see how a tiny idea could form into something bigger that would change the way my students would interact and grow with each other in my classroom. I realized that using Classkick was a great start, but did not allow my students to interact independently like I had hoped. I did not include a revised activity in my CEP 817 work, but on my own I changed the activity and kept working to build relationships in my classroom. I went with the platform Flipgrid. This platform gave children the opportunity to make videos instead of just pictures. I also loved giving them the freedom to have time to listen to their peers' ideas and make comment videos. With Classkick I had to lead the discussion, display the activity, and guide the student to talk

to the class. Flipgrid gave my students the power to be independent, and I loved it. I could tell they had so much more fun with Flipgrid. They kept asking to use the platform again when the activity was over. It is so exciting to see scholars excited about learning. Even though we were only learning about each other, this activity gave me a pathway to use this not only for social activities, but for academic activities as well. I loved that Flipgrid creates an even playing field for students to achieve, participate, and conquer.

Diving into the Stanford Model for Design has changed me as a teacher. I now understand the 5 steps it takes to be able to implement something new in my class. I feel confident about the process because now I have been through it. I believe that in the future I will be able to discover problems and take my ideas through the design process to become an even better teacher for my current and future students. This course gave so much flexibility that it created such low stakes for each part of the process. I remember reading guidelines like “There is not right or wrong. Try to jot down your thoughts in the moment.” This made me feel less anxious and willing to let go and create. I felt like I could make mistakes and I would not be judged for them, but instead supported and encouraged to be better for my scholars. I believe that the most important item I took away from the Design Model is how to implement this for my students. I feel that since I have now gone through it, I can better support my students to use this process in school. I have so many new ideas about turning standards from my curriculum into projects by using the Stanford Model of Design. It will open up a whole new world to my scholars and give them the chance to experience what I did from

this course. As Benjamin Franklin said, "Tell me and I forget, teach me and I may remember, involve me and I learn."