



Teaching and Learning During A Nation in Crisis



Taylor Coleman - 6th grade World Geography - UPSM Middle School

On the night of January 6, the teacher social media groups I am involved in were abuzz with resources to lead students in discussing the insurrection in class the next day. I found a helpful slideshow created by a teacher to provide background information and lead discussions on the topics of how "not normal" this situation was, as well as the double standard of how law enforcement handled these "protesters" compared to Black Lives Matter protesters over the summer. I posted on our school's Schoology page, urging other teachers to discuss this in Crew, as I would not see the majority of my social studies students until the following week due to the block schedule.

I was extremely impressed with my 6th grade crew. Many of them were aware of what occurred the day prior and saw footage of it. Multiple students provided insightful ideas and reactions to what happened, even bringing up the double standard of how these more privileged protesters were treated before I got to the slide that pointed this out!

For Inauguration Day, again in Crew, I briefly overviewed the meaning of the day and asked students to share their thoughts, questions, and opinions. We had another wonderful discussion. Following the discussion, I assigned students to respond via flipgrid to one of the following questions:

What does it mean to you to have Kamala Harris as Vice President?

Why is giving back important to you?

What is your vision for America?

This was an assignment idea created by the Biden campaign team and sent out to the social studies department by our fearless leader Sharon Hopkins. I jumped at the opportunity to allow students to voice their ideas.

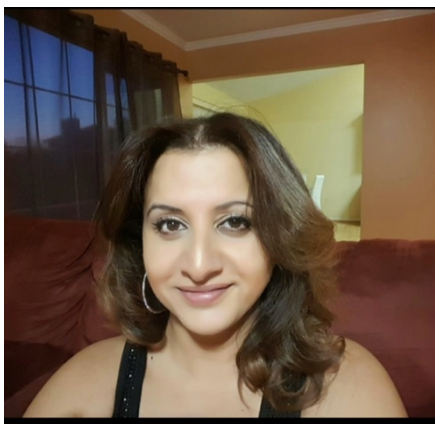


Kelly Sullivan - 9th Grade U.S. History - UPA High School

As I closed out class on January 6th, I was alerted to the events via our school GroupMe and had them confirmed shortly after when my grandmother called for me to see the news coverage. I found myself watching the updates of information on a separate screen while we attended our staff meeting. I had to process as my partner, Quinn Wurmlinger and I exchanged messages after the meeting (and into the night) on how we would deliver the information.

We decided on tying the insurrection at the capital into our focus question and lesson surrounding patriotism and critiques of the government where we compare and contrast the government's responses to Schenck's use of the 1st amendment to support his opposition to the draft and the response to those who sought to leverage it as reasoning for breaking into the Capitol building. They were able to interact verbally in fish-bowl-like discussions as well as respond via Peardeck individually as well as with group mates.

Most scholars were hurt and then motivated. What started off as questions and frustration with the obvious differences in the treatment of Black Lives Matter protesters throughout the summer, and the MAGA protesters became affirmations for the future. *"Because in the next election, we'll be able to vote and we can make sure this never happens again"* - Tyon Atkins, 14



Ms. Suki Johal - 12th Grade Social Studies & Debate - UPA High School

When I first saw footage of the insurrection I was in complete shock. I could not believe that all of these crazy people were storming the Capitol Building. My kids began to text in our chat groups about the images that they were seeing. They were very concerned and were asking a lot of questions that my students had the following day in class. I began class on January 7th with an image of a large number of national guard members posted on the Capitol Building steps appearing to be

prepared for the insurrection. The question I posed with the image was, "What were these national guard members prepared for?" I had many students reply that they were there for the insurrectionists. They were shocked and appalled to learn the truth. However, many of my kids were hip to the fact that these national guard members were posted there to protect the Capitol from the Black Lives Matter peaceful protestors. My seniors asked questions like, "What is a coup?" and "Why does the news keep mentioning the 25th amendment?"

However, the most obvious question took us back to class's big question, "What has shaped America's identity?", because we all know if these insurrectionists were black or brown, there would have been a massacre on Jan 6th, 2021. They traced it back to Manifest destiny. They ran with the conversation on their own. It became a student-led conversation that took them from white privilege to manifest destiny. At the end of all the discussion, my kids and I were left with one question that we all felt like we knew the answer to, "Is anyone really going to be held accountable for this?"