Nearpod

Nearpod (nearpod.com) is an interactive lesson-building tool that can help you incorporate 21st century literacy skills into your language lessons and provide learners with opportunities to exercise these skills.

Features

The Nearpod Silver plan, which is free for teachers with classes of up to 40 students, allows you to create interactive and multimodal lessons, which can include formative assessments. This tool can help you create interactive and engaging content, such as lessons with interactive video and other activities. Figure 1 is a representative inside view of Nearpod.

To get started with Nearpod, just create an account at nearpod.com or log in with your Google or Office 365 account.

What new technology tool do you recommend—and how can teachers use it in their classrooms?

This issue’s tip comes from Priya Panday-Shukla, a Spanish instructor and PhD student in the Language, Literacy, and Technology program at Washington State University, Pullman, Washington. She is a recipient of a 2020 ACTFL Research Priorities Initiative award.

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Once you are into the app, you can create lessons from scratch by uploading your own Google Slides, PowerPoint slides, or videos. You can also select slides and videos from the site categories to add interactive content. These include Web Content (to add website links), VR Field Trip (for 360° images), Videos (from YouTube or created by the user), and Audio, to name a few. Figure 2 is a screenshot of content that can be added to a lesson.

You can also choose to incorporate activities into your presentations by selecting games (e.g., Time to Climb, Matching Pairs, Memory Test), Open-Ended Question, Fill in the Blank, Quiz, Poll, Draw It, Collaborate Board, or Flipgrid. Figure 3 is a screenshot of activities that can be added to a lesson.

For example, in a Time to Climb activity, learners answer questions, score points based on how fast they answer and keep climbing until the end of the game. You are able to see the progress of each student, the questions they answered, and who is leading the game. Figure 4 shows sample teacher and student views of a Time to Climb activity.

There is also a Draw It feature which is like a virtual whiteboard, and a Collaborate Board which allows students to collaborate and post their ideas or opinions.

You can also select a pre-made lesson from the Nearpod Library and customize it for your students’ specific needs. A quick overview of these features is available at vimeo.com/444560128.

Nearpod still supports only Spanish and French. Although these languages do not have a tab or clickable link on the main page, just search for pre-made lessons by going to the Nearpod Library and typing “Spanish” or “French” in the search bar.

You can deliver Nearpod lessons synchronously using Live Participation, Front of Class, Live Participation + Zoom (beta version), or asynchronously using the Student-Paced mode.

Nearpod also has a feature called Quick Launch, which allows you to create Open-Ended Questions, add to a Collaborative Board, and carry out Draw It activities on the fly without creating a lesson.

Once students complete the assigned lessons, you can view the performance of each student by clicking on the Reports tab to generate a report.

How Does Nearpod Support Literacy?

In the 21st century, literacy goes beyond the traditional language skills—reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Literacy now integrates technology and utilizes diverse strategies to help prepare language learners for a global society (ACTFL, n.d).

Nearpod supports literacy by using the “Create, critique, analyze, and evaluate multimedia texts” component, which establishes that “Students in the 21st century must be critical consumers and creators of multimedia texts” (NCTE, 2013). Nearpod:

• Offers opportunities to create multimedia texts.
• Provides opportunities to critique multimedia texts.
• Fosters the ability to analyze multimedia texts.
• Provides opportunities to evaluate multimedia texts.

Conclusions

Literacy is a dynamic process that is directly connected to language learning. You can support your students’ literacy progression by utilizing interactive tools like Nearpod in your teaching practice and allowing learners to use the platform to generate their own multimedia texts.

With Nearpod, learners are not only consumers but also producers of texts. The app offers opportunities for learners to develop 21st century literacies by supporting, directly and indirectly, their creativity and critical thinking skills to create, critique, analyze, and evaluate multimedia texts.

References
