Flipgrid app passing across ECISD

Students get out of their comfort zone with the help of an educational social media outlet

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The Ector County Independent School District Innovation Department is spreading the word to campuses about an app called Flipgrid, which is aimed at enhancing teaching and student engagement.

Chief Innovation Offi cer Jason Osborne said Flipgrid is like an educational version of Snapchat, Twitter or Instagram. **Students** can create short videos where they can express their interest in a topic in science or a career and technology education subject, for example, get answers to their questions and comment on other **students**' comments.

Osborne said this is a way to get **students** to come out of their comfort zone and share information in the classroom or at home. **Students** may feel more comfortable asking questions to their smart device than having a conversation in class.

Osborne has his own grid on fossils and exploration and his own adventures. He said he has answered questions from many **students** in the district and around the world. He added that future grids might be different.

"It's another really useful way of getting information out and kids sharing information. It's also a great peer-to-peer platform," Osborne said. He added that Superintendent Tom Crowe is very excited about the learning and sharing Flipgrid can bring to the classroom.

ECISD Science Coordinator Ashley Bryant said she introduced Flipgrid to all the secondary department chairpersons at a recent meeting and everyone was "really interested" in the fact that someone from the district was the explorer featured. They also liked the fact that **students** could converse **with** someone who had been involved in exploration and been in the field.

Osborne said a big component of PICK Education, which blends realworld learning **with** state requirements, is **students** learning from each other. He added that it's also a good way for teachers and **students** to work on solving problems.

"On the fossils and exploration grid, you'll see that teachers are interacting … and asking questions because they're curious. When kids see that interaction **with** teachers being curious along **with** them, you've just created a whole different atmosphere. Kids tend to let their guard down. They become more of a unit in the classroom (**with**) teachers and **students** working together to problem solve," Osborne said.

"Without even realizing it, kids are learning at a faster rate because it's not something that feels like it's mandatory. It's something that's fun and learning is fun and information sharing is fun and interesting," he added.

Osborne said Flipgrid also is a "great platform" for ECISD's career and technical education program.

"If you want to do something in welding or auto mechanics, kids can share information, or maybe they can share tips and tricks of the trade," Osborne said.

He added that through Flipgrid, teachers can tell how their **students** are learning, how they are retaining information and what jazzes them up.

In PICK Education initiatives, Osborne said youngsters are often wearing GoPro cameras so teachers and administrators can see what the **students** see. "I think that's really interesting and powerful," he added. Executive Director of Athletics Todd Vesely said Flipgrid may also be useful for athletics and physical education.

"… This is an unbelievable platform where they get to interact **with** peers anywhere and instructors anywhere on a multitude of subjects. We haven't even begun to **explore** all the possibilities that this platform gives us. But that's what we want to do is want to unleash that natural curiosity," Vesely said.

During the three-week introduction to the app, of which this is Week 3, a challenge was issued to share an antique from their home or school and explain what the piece says about the time it came from. Whoever comes up **with** the most interesting engagement pieces will receive a fossil that Osborne found that has been on the Discovery Channel and other outlets.

He said he would ship it to the winning classroom as a teaching tool.

Joshua Basse, a seventhgrade science teacher and science department chair at Crockett Middle School, said he just started using Flipgrid **with** his pre-advanced placement class last week.

"It's like Instagram for education. I think it's good for the **students** because it's on their level. … They can make videos and ask questions to the people giving the course. For teachers, it can prompt more engagement from **students**," Basse said.

Teachers can also receive feedback from **students** or answer their questions through the app.

There are a little more than 400 **students** taking seventh grade science, Basse said.

"We're trying to get other science teachers involved, as well. Hopefully, we can do a training on it for all science teachers" and other instructors, Basse said.

Falcon Early College High School AVID Coordinator/ teacher Elizabeth Gray said Flipgrid will be a "great tool" to connect **with** expert presenters and other **students** locally or around the world.

AVID stands for Advancement via Individual Determination and is a college preparation program.

Falcon Early College High School, on the University of Texas of the Permian Basin campus, offers high school **students** a chance to earn up to 60 hours of college credit while still in high school.