The Southwest: People, Places, and Cultures Reflection

As they did with the first nearpod about the Midwest, students enjoyed this presentation, especially the virtual field trips, fun facts, and media that was embedded in the nearpod. I did notice that overall participation was lower this time, with a class participation score of 76% as opposed to 93% like the last nearpod. However, the class still had an organic and lively conversation about the subject material throughout the lesson.

There was one major issue with the presentation which occurred when I shared a video pertaining to cowboys in the Southwest Region. I really wanted to show something from "old Hollywood" to demonstrate how cowboys became a common trope in film and cartoons. However, when I searched for videos, it was very difficult for me to find a video that did not include a racist depiction of Native Americans. Because I didn't want to use any of that material, I settled on an old Disney cartoon that did not include any Native American characters, but did involve a lot of use of cartoon guns. Because the use of guns and explosives was very "cartoony" in nature (for example, a bullet traveled in loops) and no characters actually suffered lasting injuries. However, there was still a concern that was voiced by Holly and Carmen, as well as some students in the class, that the video was inappropriate. With reflection, I agree that using the video in the way that I did was not a good choice. However, I think that if I opened up a discussion before the video and provided a "disclaimer," as well as included other materials so that students could view cowboys through a different lens, the exercise would have gone better.

If I were to do this lesson again, I would definitely change the way I introduced the disney cartoon I used about cowboys to reflect the times and the content included in the video. If I had been intentional in the way I introduced the video, I think the discussion around it would have been better and students would have been less surprised and confused about why they were watching it in school. I would also consider spacing these Nearpods out more and do other activities in between before moving on to the culminating project. For example, instead of putting a MyMaps component in the project, I might have students work with them in between Nearpods in order to build expertise. Then, students could use their ready made maps in their presentations! Doing something like this was difficult in the context of the MAT program because I wanted the entire unit to be done by a certain date.