



MISSOURI COUNCIL FOR THE SOCIAL STUDIES

HORIZON

THE PUBLICATION FOR MCSS MEMBERS

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S P R I N G 2 0 1 9

The President's Corner

By: Brian Anton
MCSS President

Happy Spring!

We are getting close to the end of the school year, and I'm sure that we are all excited about all of the summer activities that we have planned. For me, summer means baseball and traveling with my family, and I feel so fortunate to have chosen a career where I can pursue the things that I have a passion for.

At this time of year, we often have to take a step back when students' and teachers' schedules get loaded up, and classroom interruptions seem to take place regularly.

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SAVE THE DATE
FEBRUARY 21-22, 2020
MCSS | ST. LOUIS

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The grind at the end of the year is always challenging, and I have to take a step back and reflect on the fact that I also chose this career because I am passionate about students and history/government. I have to be mindful of the fact that the job I do in the classroom significantly impacts how my students feel about these subjects.

This is often difficult as state assessments approach, and once they're over, we kind of wonder what's next for our students and classrooms. For me, this provides the opportunity to try something new that I have picked up at the MCSS conference, social media, or the awesome network of educators that I am surrounded with.

It is so important for us, as educators, to promote social studies. Our passion for teaching our subject can influence how students think about social studies courses, encouraging relevant discussions about their importance. As we all know and understand, our field is the one that is often overlooked, but we can do our part by working to continue engaging students and showing the significance of social studies in their lives.

I challenge you to work to enjoy the rest of the school year and reflect on how we can engage our students through our passion for social studies education before we take off for the summer.

Thank you for all that you do for our students!

Brian Anton
MCSS President
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Planning for MCSS 2020 in St. Louis

By: MCSS President-Elect, Dr. Rhett Oldham

I am so excited about our 2020 Conference. As teachers prepare their professional development budgets and plans for next school year, definitely plan on being at the 2020 MCSS Conference for a variety of reasons.

First, the conference will be at the **Missouri History Museum in St. Louis, MO on February 21st and 22nd**. Located in Forest Park, the museum is a great venue and one we are so proud to partner with this year.

Second, the theme of the conference is ***Social Studies Provides 20/20 Vision to the Present***. So much of what is going on around the world could benefit from someone taking a look at social studies (history in particular) and learning from the successes and failures of others. Our conference next year will examine this very thought.



Third, we are in the final stages of some excursions throughout the conference and we will reveal those in our next edition of The Horizon. As much as I want to tell you now, I need to hold off until the final details are worked out, but we will have multiple options to choose from. This part of the conference is going to be fantastic!

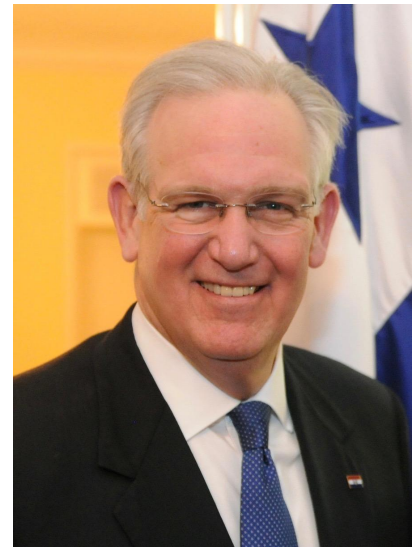
Finally, and HUGE DRUMROLL...

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Planning for MCSS 2020 in St. Louis | continued from page 3

...our keynote speaker is **Governor Jay Nixon!** MCSS is extremely proud to be hosting the former governor at our conference as he reflects on his time in office and how history can play a role in the future of our country.

MCSS continues to grow and prosper due to great leadership and outstanding membership. Collectively, the social studies teachers in the state of Missouri are stronger pedagogically and in our content area by coming together and sharing our best practices with each other. I am proud to serve as President-Elect of MCSS, but more proud to be a member.



Best regards,

Dr. Rhett Oldham

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[@SGHistoryTeach](#)



2020 Conference Site Pictures | St. Louis | Missouri History Museum



Past President Report

By: MCSS Past President, Jeffrey Benes

Thank you, everyone, for attending our annual conference! It was an excellent get-together, and trivia night was a blast! As a Social Studies professional, the highlight of the year often is getting to sit down and learn from other professionals, to have deep conversations, and to make historical jokes.

As we wrap up the school year, don't forget: our curriculum is the basis of our culture in so many ways. Without understanding where we come from, without being civically engaged, without understanding the laws of humanity, we never fully realize our potential. What you do in the classroom may not be tested, but it is incredibly important. Keep teaching your students the soft skills of critical thinking, communication, and sourcing. Our society depends on teachers like you to continue to remain active, viable, and healthy. We don't have to agree, but we do have to demonstrate an understanding of shared humanity. That begins in our classrooms.

Please, take some time to look for strong PD in your content area: Many summer programs will have ended their submission process, but mark them for next year; explore recognition programs such as the [DAR Teacher of the Year](#), [Gilder Lehrman's TOY program](#), the [VFW's TOY program](#), and so many others; read, read, and read; stay on top of current events and how our content areas helped guide us to current national and international events; but most of all, take time to take care of yourself. Make the most of your time and recharge your batteries. Find a support network and visit some museums. Thank you, on behalf of parents everywhere, for all you do for our students.

Respectfully,

Jeff Benes

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MCSS 2019 Conference Recap

By: Brian Anton, MCSS President

Our conference provides us with the opportunity to network and expose ourselves to many new strategies and content we can take back to the classroom. I learned about integrating STEM into social studies and was reminded about our role in exposing our students to tough topics in order to prepare them for the world they will face after graduation. Gary Kremer provided us with the opportunity to reflect on the influence and impact on race relations in the state of Missouri both in the past and how that relates to the present. For me, the opportunity to meet so many social studies educators who are passionate about the subject is always a highlight, making the trivia night an enjoyable experience.



I am so proud of how the last two conferences turned out. There were a few things that I wish could have been changed (the temperature in the rooms being the most significant), but I really feel that our attendees left with at least one thing they could take back to their classrooms. It is one of my favorite weekends of the year and I always come back rejuvenated because I am reminded about how many awesome educators we have in social studies classrooms across the state. I think that as a group, the conference attendees were more engaged than ever before, and we saw an increase in breakout presentation and workshop attendance across the board.

Check out the next page for a few conference takeaways from our preservice board member, Brittany Ewers from College of the Ozarks.

2019 Conference Takeaways

By: Brittany Ewers

No matter if you were an experienced veteran teacher, a new teacher, or even a preservice teacher like me, you were able to take away valuable resources, information, and advice, not only from the presenters but from other fellow social studies teachers during the 2019 MCSS conference. As I looked at the descriptions of all the sessions offered, it was difficult to choose which sessions I wanted to attend; they all sounded interesting and helpful! Being a preservice teacher though, I chose sessions that I believed would answer my latest questions and most benefit me at this moment in my career (as I complete my clinicals and discover my own pedagogy).

How will I navigate tough conversations in my classroom? From the conference, I received advice and resources on how to effectively discuss tough and touchy, yet relevant, topics. Topics such as reproductive rights, LGBTQ, gender, racism, gun control, and Islamophobia in the classroom. Not only did I receive information (and valuable primary sources) on how I could teach and advise my future students about these topics, but in another session, I learned how to facilitate structured and civil discourse between my students about those same contentious topics. During both sessions, I listened to experienced teachers discuss their own personal experiences in dealing with these issues, and the advice I received, I could not have gained from my college classes.

How will I keep my future students engaged? This is a question I have already asked myself hundreds of times during my clinical experiences (especially as I stand in front of a classroom of tired students, teaching about important, yet dull topics like the acquisition of the Oregon territory). Luckily, because I attended this conference, I added strategies and resources to my teacher toolbox that will empower me to create appealing lesson plans using teacher-friendly technology. What adolescent today does not enjoy online games, social media, virtual field trips, and graphic design? The technological resources that I collected included all the following trends and will undoubtedly keep the attention of my future students.

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2019 Conference Takeaways | continued from page 7

In addition to online applications, I learned how to energize my classroom by integrating music to teach about historical topics. I learned how to teach themes and concepts, and how to properly incorporate candy into my lessons without breaking my non-existent bank or using it as a desperate bribe.

How will I be able to not only survive, but thrive, during my first year of teaching? As a preservice teacher about to begin my career next year, one specific session stood out to me; it was entitled “From Surviving to Thriving.” During this session, participants were able to share their first-year struggles with both a new teacher and a veteran teacher. I learned that relationships and organization are critical to a successful year. Throughout my college career, my professors have emphasized the importance of establishing relationships with students and staying organized, but actually hearing personal experiences about how those two elements helped other young teachers overcome obstacles during their first years of teaching put them in perspective.



Out of all of the tips, strategies, and resources I gained from the conference, my biggest takeaway is how important networking is. As a preservice teacher about to enter the field, I am full of excitement, confusion, and concern. I was able to reassert my excitement, clear up confusion, and alleviate my fears by just talking to other teachers. I am not stepping into the classroom alone next year--I have the support of awesome social studies teachers across Missouri, and I would not have realized this without attending the conference.

2019 MCSS Conference | Jefferson City | Capital Plaza



**THANKS BRIAN FOR
PLANNING A
GREAT 2019
MCSS
CONFERENCE!**

Checklist of Everything You Need for a New Unit

By: Jessica Barnes

@MsBarnesHHS

This checklist isn't just for new teachers - it is for veteran teachers too. The fundamental challenge facing historians is that history never stops. Therefore, we are constantly reworking our units in various classes. The following is meant to be a helpful checklist (there may be items you could add or subtract personally) to get those creative juices flowing!

Checklist of Everything You Need in a Unit:

- ☐ Primary Source
- ☐ Secondary Source
- ☐ Map (if applicable)
- ☐ Economic Info (if applicable)
- ☐ Lecture
- ☐ Multi-media of some kind
- ☐ Current Events
- ☐ Project
- ☐ Review Activity(ies)
- ☐ Assessment (traditional, performance, or project-based)



Other Tips:

- ☐ Have you built in student choice in the process, product, and/or content throughout the unit?
- ☐ Do you have at least 4-6 graded items for the unit?
- ☐ Have you built in at least one day of review and one day for the assessment?
- ☐ Do students understand how the content relates to and affects them today, clearly?
- ☐ Remember, there are roughly 21 days if you have a block schedule, or 42 days if you have everyday classes in a quarter. This should help you plan the # of days per unit.

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Checklist of Everything You Need for a New Unit | continued from page 10

Traditional Assessment Checklist

- ☐ Minimum of 4 types of questions, weighted equally (multiple-choice, map, essay, etc.)
- ☐ Study guide given one week in advance
- ☐ Multiple choice question answers should be roughly the same length
- ☐ Over half the questions are going BEYOND knowledge-based Bloom's Taxonomy

Happy planning!

Beyond the Textbook: Incorporating Simulations into the Classroom

By: Molly Dohm

As teachers, we are always looking for ways to create new and engaging lesson plans that students actually enjoy. The main problem though, is that students always seem so “bored” by school. Over the past six months, I set out to think about *why* they are so bored. And then it hit me...our students thrive on experiences.

Lately my students (and probably yours, too) have been overwhelmingly consumed with playing the popular online video game, Fortnite - it seems that it is all I ever hear about! When asked why they are so obsessed with the game, I received two main answers. First, the game allows players to get swept up in their avatar and the storyline.

FORTNITE

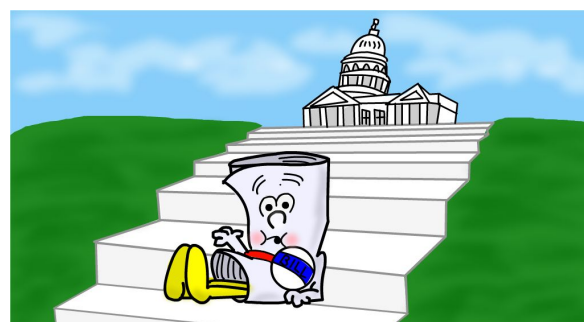
Secondly, there are several neat gadgets for players to experiment with - it triggers their curiosity and problem-solving skills, whether they realize it or not. Overall, teens love Fortnite because the game immerses them in an unique *experience*.

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Beyond the Textbook- Incorporating Simulations into the Classroom | continued from page 11

So why can't we teach social studies in a way that makes it an experience? For my classroom, simulations have seemed to be the answer. Each unit, I have added at least one simulation that lets students experience a time period in American history, or a process in government. By allowing students to immerse themselves in a simulation, we are giving them permission to draw conclusions and learn from experiences. Some of my student's favorite simulations have included:

- Industrialization Assembly Lines
- WWI Trench Warfare
- Paranoia during the Red Scare
- "The Game of Life" - Great Depression Version
- Sodas & The Electoral College
- How a Bill becomes a Law
- And more...



To my surprise, creating simulations were not as daunting as I once thought. Here is my advice for creating an engaging and effective simulation in your classroom:

- 1) **Choose a "Take-Away"** - When you plan your next unit, choose one or two major concepts that you want students to take away and remember. Designing your simulation around "big idea" material allows students to grasp it in a more meaningful and applicable way.
- 2) **Teach the Basics** - You can plan the best simulation in the world, but if students do not have background knowledge, it will not make as much of an impact. By teaching key content previously, even just vocabulary, you can have a simulation that is far less difficult for students to understand and draw understanding from.
- 3) **Create a Simple, Clear Simulation** - The last thing you want during your simulation are confused students...they get confused, cranky, and eventually give up. While they should be challenging, simulations shouldn't make students frustrated and wanting to give up.

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Beyond the Textbook- Incorporating Simulations into the Classroom | continued from page 12

Personally, that way I beat this is by planning and creating simple, step-by-step instructions that not only I follow, but give to the students as well. By setting expectations and giving clear instructions, we can reach the desired goal that much easier.

- 4) **Reflect & Apply** - Hands down, the most important part of creating a simulation experience is reflection. I repeat - reflect, reflect, *reflect*! By asking students reflection questions (either verbally or on an assignment), they are connecting their experience to the content - and hopefully, they will take away the main point(s) that you wanted them to!

Once I started implementing simulations into each unit of both my American History and U.S. Government courses, I have seen a peak in interest and understanding. After taking a poll of my students, over 51% claimed that they prefer hands-on learning instead of lectures, notes, or even the ever-popular hyperdocs. In fact, when I review material with students before a unit test, far more students remember the content that was accompanied by a simulation than the material that was not. If you can teach the content, create an activity for students to *experience* the content, and draw connections to apply their knowledge, they will never forget the lesson. And, fingers crossed, they won't be bored anymore either.



The image shows a screenshot of the MoSocialStudies Twitter profile. The profile name is MoSocialStudies, with the handle @MoSocialStudies. The bio states: "Serving social studies teachers in Missouri and surrounding states." The profile shows 1,009 tweets, 219 following, and 1,035 followers. A tweet from Ms B (@bohndrake) dated April 30 is highlighted, discussing the Louisiana Purchase of 1803. The tweet includes a map of the Louisiana Purchase territory. A blue callout box on the right says "JOIN US ON TWITTER" and encourages following the account for resources and updates.

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@MoSocialStudies on Twitter

Tweets 1,009 Following 219 1,035 302

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Missouri
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Joined June 2009

137 Followers you know

41 Photos and videos

Tweets **Tweets & replies** **Media**

MoSocialStudies Retweeted
Ms B @bohndrake · Apr 30
#OTD 1803 – The US purchases the #Louisiana Territory from France for \$15 million, with its 828k square miles more than doubling the nation. Some argued at the time that #POTUS Jefferson was exercising executive power with the purchase. #USHistory #Frontier

LOUISIANA PURCHASE

MoSocialStudies Retweeted
Mount Vernon @MountVernon · Apr 29
Join us for a special announcement on Facebook Live with @MountVernon CEO @DouglasBradburn tomorrow, April 30 at 10:00 am EST in the rare books suite at @GWBooks! bit.ly/1eMm87a

JOIN US ON TWITTER

Over 1,000 people follow the MCSS Twitter feed. Follow us to keep up to date on great resources related to teaching social studies. Ideas for your classroom and the chance to network with historians all over the world in all content areas!

A Look at the Close-Up Strategy

By: Dr. Angela Danley

As a professor of elementary education, I have had the opportunity to participate in a yearlong professional development training through the Association of College and University Educators (ACUE). Through this opportunity, I have learned about how to engage students in the content being taught. One strategy that was new learning to me was a strategy connected to questioning.

When engaging students in classroom discussion in reading not only during the communication arts block, but also in content areas, the use of questioning strategies are essential. "Questioning lies at the heart of comprehension ...it is the process of seeking answers and asking further questions that keeps the reading going" (Generation Ready, para 4, 2017). Questions connected to the text should provide the students the opportunity to go beyond the surface and spark conversations between the students. "When teachers ask higher-order questions and give students opportunities to develop deep explanations, learning is enhanced across content areas" (Corley & Rauscher, 2013, p. 1).



One strategy that can be used in the classroom is from Brookfield and Preskill (2015), called **Close-Up**. Teachers form different types of prompts to deepen discussion (Brookfield & Preskill, 2015). These questions form the mnemonic: **CLOSE-UP**.

- **Clarity:** Questions that ask students to clarify their thinking. Example: What do you mean by that? Can you put it another way?
- **Linking:** Questions that ask students to connect different parts of content. These help students to connect ideas from class sessions or their classmates during a class discussion. Example: How does your conclusion connect to the reading? What is the connection between Student A's and Student B's arguments?
- **Open-Ended:** Questions that do not seek a single response. Example: What does it mean to...? What does it look like to...?
- **Synthesis:** Questions that allow the students to summarize key points. Example: What questions still linger? What are the lessons we take from...? What is the most important concept we've looked at in our reading?

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A Look at the Close-Up Strategy | continued from page 14

- **Evidence:** Questions that ask students to support their argument or answer. Example: What evidence can you provide to support your thinking? What data can you cite? How do you know this?
- **Understanding:** Questions that provide the teacher whether or not students have understood the content properly. Example: What examples can you provide for the concept?
- **Priority:** Questions that ask students to prioritize the key concepts or most important points made during the reading or discussion. Example: What are the most important points taken away from the reading or the discussion in class?

Listening, questioning, and responding are the three essentials needed for a discussion over the reading assignment to take place (Brookfield & Preskill, 2015). The strategic questioning strategy like Close-Up allows for the teacher to engage the students in class discussions over the texts read. These types of questions hold the students accountable to the text and assigned readings. This strategy can be used across grade levels and content areas to help students deepen their understanding of the reading. Once students understand the Close-Up strategy, teachers can place students in small groups to use the mnemonic device to discuss an assigned reading

(short article, report, or case studies) to foster student-led discussions. McElhone (2014) stated, “Reading is a social, cultural process, and talk is a crucial tool for comprehending, learning from, synthesizing across, and generating new ideas with texts” (p. 2). Using a strategy like Close-Up provides students the opportunity to be engaged in the learning community by collaborating with their peers in a respectful manner.



References

- Brookfield, S.D. & Preskill, S. (2015). 50 great ways to get people talking. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Corley, M.A., & Rauscher, W.C. (2013). Deeper learning through questioning. Retrieved from: https://lincs.ed.gov/sites/default/files/12_TEAL_Deep_Learning_Qs_complete_5_1_0.pdf
- Generation Ready (2017). Critical reading and the importance of questioning. Retrieved from: <https://www.generationready.com/critical-reading-and-the-importance-of-questioning/>
- McElhone, D. (2014). Text talk: engaging students in purposeful discussions. International Reading Association. (p. 1-14).

Check out an example of the strategy on the next page!

Example of Using the Close-Up Strategy with the book Paperboy by Vince Vawter

Background of book: I selected this book as an example because of the thematic connections across the content areas. As an educator, I believe whenever you can find a piece of literature and connect it to social studies themes, students are given the opportunity to make text to self and text to world connections. Paperboy has themes connected to friendship, racism, segregation, and family. Addressing these themes can foster discussion, which will allow them an opportunity to learn from the author’s point of view and from their peers. Teachers can extend this activity by finding informational text readings such as articles or excerpts connected to themes to use the Close-Up mnemonic strategy.

Mnemonic Device	Question and Discussion Ideas *once students are comfortable with this strategy, allow them to create their own questions for discussion.
Clarity: Questions that ask students to clarify their thinking. Example: What do you mean by that? Can you put it another way?	<p>This can be used for any question posed that the teacher wants more clarification on or if another student wants more clarification on throughout the discussion. One example is: Explain the significance of the scene when the boy stands up in class and says, “My name is Victor Vollmer the Third” (p. 222).</p> <p>The teacher allows the students to answer the question and asks for clarification, as needed.</p>
Linking: Questions that ask students to connect different parts of content. These help students to connect ideas from class sessions or their classmates during a class discussion. Example: How does your conclusion connect to the reading? What is the connection between Student A’s and Student B’s arguments?	<p>In the book, good and bad things happen to Little Man on the paper route. What might Little Man say are the best and worst things that happen? Would Little Man consider his experiences with Mrs. Worthington to be “good stuff ” or “bad stuff ”?</p> <p>Discuss how Little Man’s and Rat’s friendship changes when they enter seventh grade. How are these changes related their growth over the summer?</p> <p>These types of questions will allow the students to connect ideas and will stem a conversation between students.</p>

Example of the Close-Up Strategy | continued from page 16

Mnemonic Device	Question and Discussion Ideas *once students are comfortable with this strategy, allow them to create their own questions for discussion.
Open-Ended: Questions that do not seek a single response. Example: What does it mean to...? What does it look like to...?	In the story, the boy is puzzled and surprised when he discovers his birth certificate and sees that his father is "Unknown." Why do you think his parents have never told him the circumstances of his birth?
Synthesis: Questions that allow the students to summarize key points. Example: What questions still linger? What are the lessons we take from...? What is the most important concept we've looked at in our reading?	An external conflict is an event that a character encounters as an obstacle where an internal conflict is a problem the character faces on his or her own. Identify the external conflicts and internal conflicts in the novel. Explain how both internal and external conflicts change Little Man by the end of the summer. What lessons can you as the reader take away from Little Man?
Evidence: Questions that ask students to support their argument or answer. Example: What evidence can you provide to support your thinking? What data can you cite? How do you know this?	Define friendship from Little Man's point of view. How did he and Rat become friends? What evidence can you provide to support your thinking?
Understanding: Questions that provide the teacher whether or not students have understood the content properly. Example: What examples can you provide for the concept?	A variety of questions can be asked that support the book, such as: Why does Victor prefer to write out his story instead of saying it aloud? In what ways does Victor's stuttering affect his life? How does Victor's view of the segregated South form over the course of the book? How does Mr. Spiro affect Victor and his growth over the course of the summer?
Priority: Questions that ask students to prioritize the key concepts or most important points made during the reading or discussion. Example: What are the most important points taken away from the reading or the discussion in class?	What do you think are the key points the author was trying to make throughout the story? The teacher can also activate conversation by asking questions focused on the theme of friendship, segregation, and loneliness.

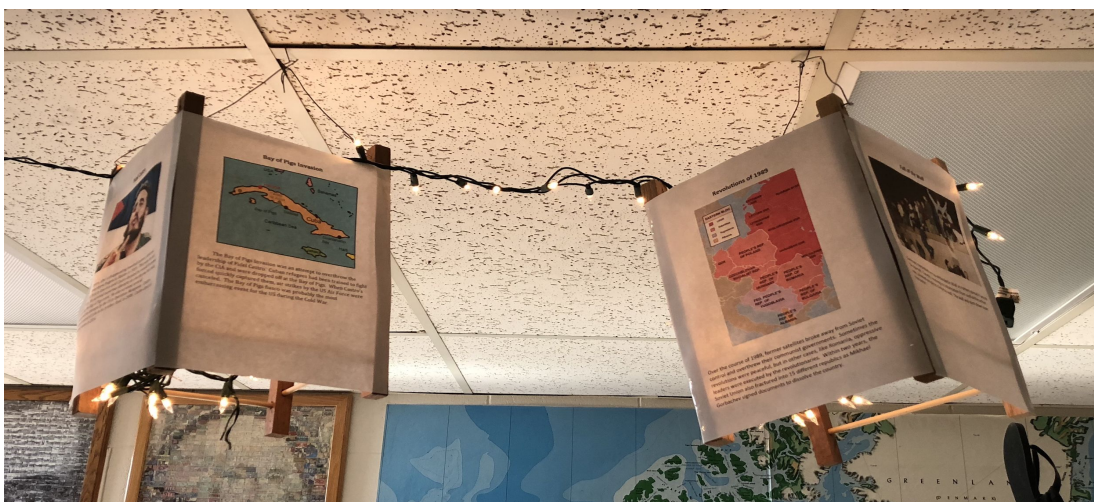
Lanterns: One if by Land, Two if by Christmas Lights?

By: Derek Frieling

Looking for low-tech, but engaging activity for your students? Have them build lanterns. Paul Revere may or may not be involved in helping you build them.

I was inspired when I attended a conference at the Montana Historical Society. The library had lamps in the classroom with four-sided shades that depicted historical pictures. When the light shone through the photos, the effect was amazing. My lesson plan from the conference was formed in one instant from a glance at the lamps. When looking for a summary activity, I have my students decorate a low-tech lantern. I have students choose or assigned a topic within the unit. They will highlight their topic with 4 images and a paragraph to summarize each image. These pictures and description will tell the story of their topic. I could not afford actual lamps, or the special lampshades like the historical society possesses, but I could make a low-tech version.

I simply cut scrap lumber (I build furniture as a hobby) into $\frac{3}{4}$ by $\frac{3}{4}$ by 12-inch pieces for each corner, connected each by 8-inch dowel rods, and hung them with baling wire. Making them, this size enabled my students to simply tape their summaries printed on standard size paper to the lantern frame. Then I hang the lanterns from my dropped ceiling tiles and illuminate them with recycled Christmas lights.



Although not as professional as the historical society, students are excited that other students are examining their work, much more than just posting them on the wall or bulletin board. This summarization activity can be run with any unit that has ample pictures.

Paul Revere was analyzing lanterns during the American Revolution, but I have used this activity both in the Cold War and the Civil Rights Movement units. No matter which unit you choose, students gain a sense of accomplishment while teaching each other.

Professional Development Opportunity- March 2019

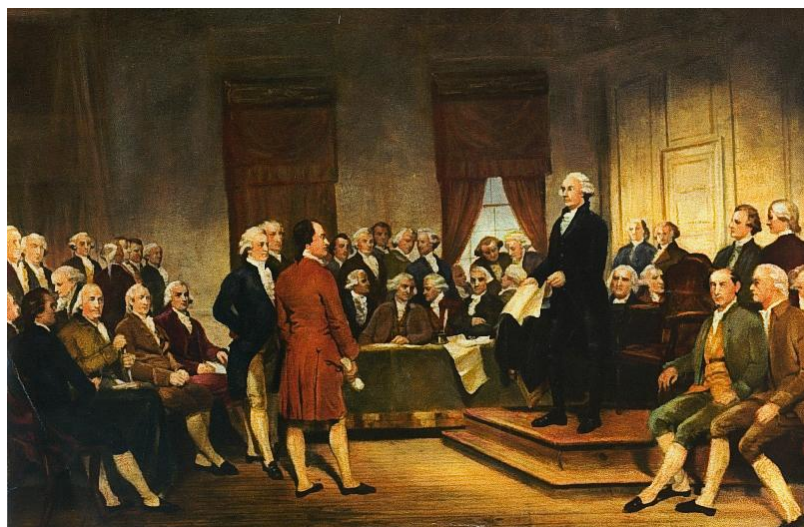
By: Nancy Ohmart

Every school year I try to enhance my knowledge of the diverse content areas in Social Studies. Recently, the Missouri Humanities sponsored a TeachingAmericanHistory.com One-Day Seminar in St. Louis, at the Missouri History Museum titled, "Missouri, Dred Scott, and the Coming of the Civil War."

First, what an adventurous venue, the Missouri History Museum! We were given time to explore the enticing facility and I can truly say I was extremely excited to explore it. The museum would definitely be a wonderful place for students to learn about our state of Missouri!



Secondly, the seminar was "discussion-based," led by Dr. Dan Monroe, an Associate Professor of History at Millikin University. The seminar focused on over 20 primary documents including Henry Clay and the Missouri Compromise, Henry Clay and the Compromise of 1850, Roger Taney and the Dred Scott v. Sandford (1857), Abraham Lincoln and his Reply to the Dred Scott Decision, and many other primary documents. Missouri social studies instructors came together to discuss the debate over Missouri statehood along with short-term and long-term causes of the Civil War. Finally, the social studies instructors were able to discuss how they currently implement the usage of primary documentation within their instructional time AND how we each plan to utilize these primary documents provided at this seminar.



I highly recommend the Teaching American History FREE seminars to everyone! There are many topics and locations to choose from, for your own personal needs, including many online. Also, they have the "50 Core Documents," which you can access for free and download an e-book copy from the teachingamericanhistory.org site.

Three Tech Tools to Try

By: Rachel McDaniel

@MrsTchrMcD

Technology can take an activity, a lesson, or a classroom to the next level. However, finding the right tool for the job can be tough because there is so much out there. The three tools I'm going to share have revolutionized my classroom and can be used in a variety of ways.

Coggle(<https://coggle.it>) is a free, Google-based service for creating mind maps over anything you are learning in class with the comfort of cloud-based, automatic saving features. Students can create accounts using Google or Microsoft, and diagrams are easily shareable in order to turn in to Google Classroom or are printable in a PDF version to submit on paper. I have used Coggle for brainstorming for projects, taking notes over topics in a unit, or had students create a presentation over a topic in class. The platform is very user-friendly without a lot of bells and whistles (unless you want to upgrade for a fee) and students enjoy the minimal customization and the ease of use.

Storyboard That (<https://www.storyboardthat.com/>) is a free web-based service for creating 3 to 6 cell comic strips. With the free, basic version, students can create up to 2 Storyboards a week using hundreds of customizations for backgrounds, props, people, and textables. I have used this in history for students to recreate events in history or to describe events in a historical figure's life. Storyboard That also has features to allow a teacher to create a Storyboard worksheet in which the teacher creates the scenes, adds worksheet components to their scenes, and then prints to create a unique worksheet.

Gimkit (<https://www.gimkit.com>) is a review game platform that is very different from Kahoot!, Quizizz, or Quizlet. Created by a high school student, Gimkit takes your existing Quizlets and turns them into a game where students compete for money by answering questions correctly. Students are able to purchase Upgrades such as multipliers for questions and increases in money per question or Powerups that allow them to reduce another player's earnings or "ice" another player, preventing that player from answering a question for 15 seconds. Games can be played individually or in teams, for a time limit or a money limit, or with Powerups or without. With the free account, you are only able to create 5 kits, but Gimkit Pro is only \$4.99 per month and gives you unlimited kits as well as game stats and the ability to search and use other kits.

Have fun incorporating these tools into your lessons, units, and classrooms!

A Message from Nancy Ohmart, VP of Membership

WE ARE SO THANKFUL FOR A WONDERFUL CONFERENCE IN JEFFERSON CITY! THANK YOU FOR YOUR EXCEPTIONAL LEADERSHIP, BRIAN, AND YOUR DILIGENT BOOKKEEPING, CHANDRA!

Welcome to MCSS ALL YOU FANTASTIC SOCIAL STUDIES INSTRUCTORS from St. Louis, Independence, Kansas City, Forsyth, Plato, Camdenton, St. Charles, Nevada, Springfield, Joplin, Gladstone, Dunlap, Eureka, Cabool, Owensville, Fordland, Warrensburg, Seymour, Marshfield, Harrisville, Webb City, Richmond, Jackson, Cape Girardeau, Potosi, House Springs, Lee's Summit, Blue Springs, Jefferson City, Farmington, Park Hills, Holts Summit, Canton, Iberia, Grain Valley, Parkville, Festus, Florissant, Nixa, Laddonia, Ashland, Brookfield, Lone Jack, Booneville, Blue Springs, Desloge, Hillsboro, Exeter, Caruthersville, Poplar Bluff, Moberly, Verona, Malden, Lebanon, Maysville, Hamilton, Charleston, Pleasant Hill, Chula, Marble Hill, Hayti, Kennett, Republic, Doniphan, Bonne Terre, Kimberly City, Bertrand, Bates City, Corder, Lawson, Branson, Rogersville, Odessa, O'Fallon, Atchison, Liberty, Kirksville, Polo, Wildwood, Tuscumbia, Gravois Mill, Dexter, Leawood, Shelbina, Lawson, Corder, Butler, Maryland, Kennett, Troy, AND many other communities!! [MCSS is better because of your involvement!! Stay in contact with MCSS on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter!](#)

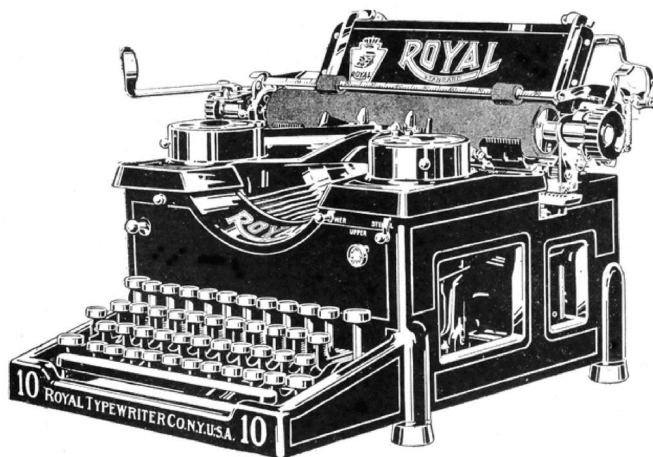
SHARE your experience with others in your school family and bring them next year!! I am so eagerly anticipating our 2020 Missouri Council for the Social Studies Conference in St. Louis!

Write for the Horizon Newsletter

Share your story, your passion with fellow social studies teachers

This is YOUR newsletter. We would love to hear about what is happening in your classroom, the idea that gets you fired up on a cold Monday morning or the topic that you love to research on your own time.

Please send us an article and we'll be happy to add it to the next copy of Horizon!



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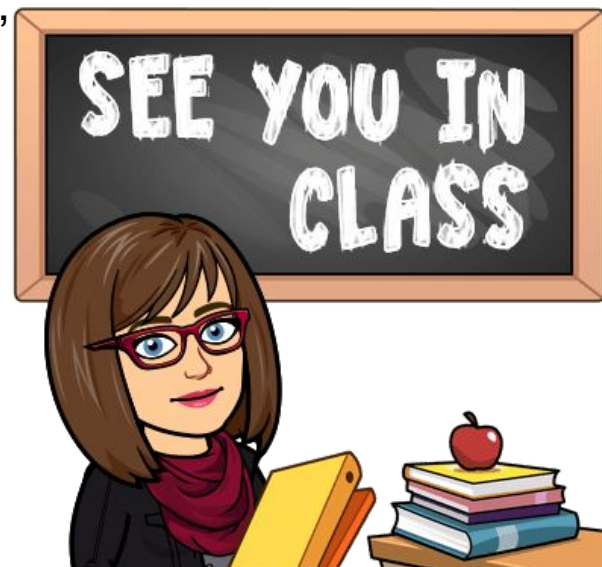


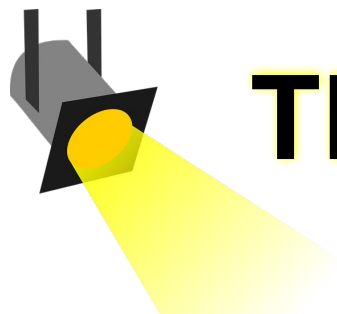
LEGISLATIVE REPORT

MCSS Legislative Report

By: Erin Townsend

Can you believe we've made it to the 4th quarter? Baseball and track season are upon us and seniors believe they have graduated already! The 4th quarter is always a great time to add something new to your toolbox to keep things fresh. This quarter's legislative resource is the [Youth Leadership Initiative](#), or YLI for short. YLI is a free resource from the University of Virginia that designs lessons plans, resources, and online activities to engage your students in the civic process. They help schools to host mock elections and also participate in E-Congress to simulate the legislative branch in action. Whether you are looking for a one-day activity or a multiple day simulation, YLI has great ideas to take back to the classroom tomorrow! Check out the website or email Erin Townsend, MCSS Vice President for Legislation at etownsend@nevada.k12.mo.us for more details!





TEACHER SPOTLIGHT

Josh Lefeber



What encouraged you to become a social studies teacher?

Former teachers of mine encouraged me to become a social studies teacher. Mr. English (8th grade SS) and Mr. Bruns (HS SS) brought social studies to life and encouraged their students to think critically. From their classes, I decided that social studies education was the path for me. Social studies was always easy to comprehend and I excelled at it. By high school, I knew that my passion was to learn about the past and to help transfer and invoke that same curiosity that inspired me to become interested in social studies to other students.

What is your favorite aspect of teaching your core subject?

My favorite aspect of teaching social studies has to be the opportunity to excite students about why the past is important and how it transforms and defines our life today. All social studies instruction must be relevant, and witnessing student discovery of how the past explains the present and may project us to the future is a great reward. All students are naturally curious, but occasionally it takes a considerable amount of work to locate that curiosity in every student.

What do you like most about teaching?

Not to sound cliché, but the part I like most about teaching are the “lightbulb moments.” Witnessing a student make connections and think critically provides the opportunity to witness their learning in action. It illustrates that your instruction works, and that the students are actively engaged to learn.

How would you define your own teaching philosophy?

My teaching philosophy in a condensed form would be defined as consistent, welcoming, and quirky. I wholeheartedly believe that consistency in the classroom promotes a stable and safe learning environment. That environment must also be welcoming and excite students for class. That doesn't mean the class is easy, but the material and instruction are engaging. I also believe that my quirky personality shines in my classroom, and maybe even more so than in my daily life. Kids should not only be interested in the material they are learning, but also the teacher helping convey their learning.

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Teacher Spotlight | continued from page 23**What is your approach to classroom management?**

Early on in my career, my classroom management style was to not smile until December. Now as I complete my sixth year of teaching, I promote that room 209 is a community and for students to look around and meet their neighbors. Neighbors help each other out, neighbors support one another, and neighbors have fun together. I stole a page out of Alfie Kohn's work of building a community in the classroom to avoid negative behaviors. As many of you know, proximity and that "teacher look" also work when needed.

How do you incorporate current events into your classroom?

Since history undoubtedly repeats itself, so do relatable current events. American history consistently relates current events and topics in the news to past events. This correlation is easy to make and it helps students to better understand the past when they witness it in the future. My government students also complete a current event assignment every week. This assignment aims to keep them up-to-date on the news in the United States and around the world. The assignment also tasks students with identifying bias in the news articles, which is an important skill in our "fake news" or non-objective journalism period the students are witnessing.

In your opinion, what makes a teacher excellent?

Excellent teachers garner the attention of all students and engage those students in the material and activities prepared every day. These teachers do a great job of connecting with their students, and the students in return have a vested interest in the class. This type of atmosphere promotes a positive classroom environment where kids arrive to class eager to learn, not always because they enjoy the material, but because they enjoy the environment in which they are learning.

What advice would you give to new social studies teachers?

I have two pieces of advice for new social studies teachers. First, you are going to make mistakes, but always make it a learning opportunity for yourself. I've failed many times in my short career of six years, but I learned early on that learning from the mistakes only improves my ability to be a successful teacher. Second, develop an immense amount of patience. Patience with students, fellow faculty, and administration will pay great dividends.

Continued on page 25

Teacher Spotlight | continued from page 24

What have you read lately that you would recommend to others?

Fishing for Fun by Herbert Hoover is a great read that relaxes and illustrates the relatability of presidents to the common man. My second recommendation is to read, *What Connected Educators do Differently*. It emphasizes the importance of professional learning networks, often through Twitter. The book was written a few years ago, but has a quality message. Todd Whitaker, one of the authors, is an inspirational educator and you should make it a priority to hear him speak. He travels the Midwest often.

What advice would you give to new teachers?

My advice to new teachers is to not let the bad outweigh the good. Often times we fixate on the problems with our students or with education, and we forget to witness the good we are doing as educators. Don't let the criticism as a teacher or coach scare you away from a rewarding profession. Too many young educators are chased away from a lack of support and stress. As a new teacher, never stop searching for the good you do and the positive ways you help your students.



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MCSS Mission Statement

The purpose of MCSS shall be to foster dialogue among teachers on the special mission of social studies, to assist teachers in teaching social studies more effectively, to promote student learning in social studies through quality teaching and curriculum, and to increase student engagement and participation for the public good.

More About MCSS

The Missouri Council for the Social Studies was founded in 1979. We are a group of volunteers who have committed ourselves to educating young minds, fostering a collaborative partnership with other educators, and growing as both professionals and individuals with a passion for the social studies.