

Title of Session: SSForum - C-SPAN in the Classroom

Moderator: Michael Hutchison

Guest Speaker: Meg Steele

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MichaelH: Welcome to tonight's Social Studies forum...

MichaelH: As probably everyone knows, we're in the beginning stages of another election campaign

MichaelH: and of course, as teachers we want to provide the best resources for our students to learn about the candidates, the issues, and how to make informed decisions about the election

MichaelH: and no one does that better than C-SPAN.

MichaelH: Tonight, we're going to look at some resources related to C-SPAN in the Classroom... and we have a guest who is going to show us what's available

MichaelH: First, though, let's start our session with some introductions... would everyone tell each other who you are, what you teach, and where you are from?

MichaelH is a technology facilitator for a school district in southwestern Indiana

JudithCo: I am an educational technologist at Laurel Bay IS in SC. and am here to get information about resources for our TAG teacher who will be doing a unit on the US presidential election.

VelvetteM: I'm a pre-service teacher from the university of Houston... I will be teaching elem. students

MichaelH: Thanks, Judith and Velvette... Meg, want to tell them who you are?

MegSt is the Education Manager at C-SPAN. We are based in Washington, DC. I taught middle and high school English and Social Studies for five years and have been working at C-SPAN for almost 7. This is my second presidential campaign and election season with the network and I was lucky enough to go to Iowa in 2000 and to New Hampshire this year.

MegSt: My primary responsibilities involve managing projects and the website for C-SPAN in the Classroom

MichaelH: Thanks, Meg!

VickiAB joined the room.

MichaelH: Vicki, we're just introducing ourselves right now..

VickiAB: okay, I am an elementary preservice teacher at the University of Houston

MichaelH: Meg, can you give us a bit of background about C--SPAN in the Classroom... we'll look at the web site in a minute... but maybe a quick overview of what teachers might find there?

MegSt: C-SPAN in the Classroom (CSiC) support educators who want to use C-SPAN as a resource in their teaching. CSiC offers a website <http://www.c-span.org/classroom> with video-based lessons, activities and more; we also email programming and other information (contests, fellowships, free posters) to members based on their interest areas.

MichaelH: Why don't we visit the site for a couple of minutes, and then everyone can come back and ask Meg any questions about the site they have?

VickiAB: ok

JudithCo: o k

MegSt: The website has activities, lessons and resource pages to complement all the programs you see on C-SPAN television--history and government are the two primary topic area. VIDEO is an important aspect of each feature, but we try to make sure all of our activities have some non-video component teachers can customize and use as well.

MichaelH: when Meg typed the URL for the site, it became a link above... you can either click on it or I'll type it again below, and what I'd like you to do is take just a couple of minutes, to look around... and then we'll discuss it

MichaelH: Meg, let me post the web page again, and everyone can take a quick look...

MichaelH: <http://www.c-span.org/classroom>

MichaelH: . o O (just click on the blue link, and the page will load in another browser window)

MichaelH: has everyone come back?

JudithCo: I'm back

VickiAB: I am back

VelvetteM: I'm not quite sure what the CSPAN school buses do

VelvetteM: back

MichaelH: Meg, do you want to talk about the Buses first, and we'll get to the site in a sec?

MegSt: The School Buses are two actual buses--the interiors are remodeled to serve as a tv studio and a presentation space. They travel around the country, going to schools, speaking to students about C-SPAN on board and using the space to also show them how television is made--a mini lesson in critical viewing.

MegSt: If you are interested in hosting the bus at your school, contact your local cable operator and you can also contact me at msteele@c-span.org

VickiAB: that would be so cool

VelvetteM: wow...interesting

VelvetteM: that is great!

MichaelH: Velvette, the Bus was at my school about six or seven years ago, and it was really something to see

JudithCo: This sounds great. I coordinate our school's morning TV show. I would love to have the bus visit us!

MegSt: It is great--that's how I went to Iowa and NH. Since C-SPAN is not a commercial network that does traditional types of advertising, it's an effective way to communicate to folks.

MichaelH: Meg, should I show everyone the web page for the Bus (if they haven't seen it already)?

MegSt: We love to go to places where teachers have requested us--makes the visits much more successful if there is someone locally who is helping to prepare the students.

VelvetteM: wow!... I really had no idea CSPAN does that

VelvetteM: I will definitely keep it in mind

MichaelH: Velvette, did you see the web page for the Bus?

VelvetteM: yes I do

MichaelH: Meg, they can make requests for the Bus to visit their school online, right?

MegSt: Here it is...follow the links for photo gallery and you can show your student postcards from across the country...a geography lesson

JudithCo: I would like to see the page.

MegSt: <http://www.c-span.org/classroom/schoolbus/bushome.asp>

MegSt: Here is the photo gallery

MegSt: <http://www.c-span.org/classroom/schoolbus/gallery.asp>

VelvetteM: bookmarking!

VickiAB: how interesting! we need to get them here in Houston!

VelvetteM: AGREED!

MichaelH: The bus is going to be in my town on Monday next week

MichaelH: Meg, now that we've seen the Bus...let's talk about some other resources

VelvetteM smiles

MegSt: Well, there are two specific projects I'll mention first, the Electoral College Map poster and the Campaign Cam contest

VickiAB: I saw the free poster

VickiAB: that is a great way to show how the electoral college is split

MichaelH: Meg, what would I need to do to request a poster?

VeronicaO: is it for public distribution?

MegSt: The poster is BIG--it shows the electoral votes for each state--since it was such an issue in 2000 and since the numbers changed for 18 states in 2004, teachers advised us this would be a useful tool. It's free for any educator who requests it...just follow the links and sign up from our home page

MichaelH: yes, Veronica... Meg's letting us know how we can request one for our classroom

MegSt: <http://www.c-span.org/classroom>

VickiAB: could I request one if I am a preservice teacher?

MichaelH: Good question, Vicki....

MegSt: We also have some more data/activities online to go with the poster...just go to the Campaigns and Elections page, scroll down on the right you'll see the "Electoral College" resources

MegSt: <http://www.c-span.org/classroom/govt/campaigns.asp>

VelvetteM: I think as I understand it ...membership is free... and since the posters are for members...I'm sure we can get one

MegSt: My favorite is a spreadsheet--this would be for high school level and higher or advanced middle school that provides all the 2000 data to help student plot electoral strategies for the candidates

MegSt: Yes pre-service teachers can get it...the trick is sign up "in care of" your supervising teacher

VickiAB: okay, thank you

MichaelH: Meg is right, the poster is BIG... what is it, Meg, about 44 inches across...?

MegSt: Once you sign up for the membership, you will get the poster. You are "free" to unsubscribe your membership at any time, but we hope you'll try it out as ultimately we think you might find other resources from C-SPAN you like....like video!

MegSt: Yes, almost 4 feet by 4 feet

MichaelH: And you have a video contest just underway, also, right Meg?

MegSt: The contest is for middle and high school students--produce a video that expresses your opinion about a campaign issue--top prize is 5,000 and teachers of top winning students get prizes too; winners will air on our networks

VickiAB: wow!

MegSt: <http://www.c-span.org/classroom/campaigncam/>

JudithCo: This is great information

MichaelH reminds everyone that all the links will be included in TAPPED IN members' transcripts when they log off

VeronicaO: ok thanks, I marked it as favorites

MegSt: Thanks! I wonder how much y'all know about C-SPAN--we are a non-profit network--25 years old this year; commercial free, show events gavel to gavel, no editorializing from us.

MegSt: Many people think watching C-SPAN is like watching paint dry--and we almost take that as a compliment...

MichaelH appreciates the fact that C-SPAN is about the only network to do gavel-to-gavel coverage of the conventions

VeronicaO: I'm from Mexico so I don't know a thing, it's great for our American Civics course (9th grade)

JudithCo: I don't know much about it because up until 1 1/2 years ago I taught in Germany for the US military students

VelvetteM: I agree as well with what Michael just said

MichaelH: Meg, could you maybe give us a bit of C-SPAN history... how the network started... it's purpose, etc?

MegSt: Our mission is to provide direct access--btwn viewers and the events/people in public affairs; so for example on our network you would have only seen Dean's entire Iowa concession speech--not an excerpt however YOU as a teacher could tape it (copyright clear) or watch any excerpt you want online...

MegSt: The website has an "about" page that offers more information...mission, milestones, etc. We are NOT a government channel (most common misconception) although we do SHOW the government...<http://www.c-span.org/about/>

MegSt: We started out showing the House of Rep gavel to gavel--a few years later added the Senate on C-SPAN2; we show hearings, campaign events, press conferences when they're not in session

MichaelH: Thanks, Meg... one thing that's cool that you have on the network is the Congressional coverage...

JudithCo: I am learning a lot

MichaelH: always interesting to see what's happening on the floor of the House and Senate

VickiAB: me too

MichaelH: You all would really enjoy Book TV also

VelvetteM: I'm on wireless...so if I somehow get disconnect it will be because of that.. I've been having problems with my internet staying connected lately... so I would like to apologize for any inconvenience

MegSt: C-SPAN2 also offers all book related programming on the weekends...the elementary school teachers there will find children's books often featured...and we have a

page with archived video featuring some of those books <http://www.c-span.org/classroom/lang/childrens.asp>

MichaelH: Meg, could you tell the group a bit about the video resources that teachers can find on the site?

MegSt: Yes, this is Book TV...also anything that has ever aired on C-SPAN can be purchased on videotape from our Archives (we also have a grant program where teachers can get videos for free) just follow the links for grants in the right nav bar)

VeronicaO: I'll pass the tips to my Mexican colleagues. They will make the Washington Workshop, March 13-19

MegSt: But YES we encourage all teachers to access the FREE video found ON DEMAND online...a great example for the Campaigns is clips of this year's Iowa Caucuses and NH primary

MegSt: <http://www.c-span.org/classroom/govt/primary.asp>

VickiAB: okay great!

MegSt: All grade levels can LEARN by SEEING voters cast their ballots, or caucus. You can also watch the whole programs, but the classroom pages usually excerpt pieces for classroom use.

MichaelH: Meg, how long are the video pieces archived?

VelvetteM: great question

MegSt: Another favorite is "meet the candidates" where we have "clip listed" events with abstracts and time codes for each candidate...event third party! <http://www.c-span.org/classroom/govt/candidates.asp>

MegSt: All the video under c-span.org/classroom url is permanently archived; c-span.org has different rotations. I can say for sure anything under the 2004 Vote link (left nav bar) is permanent.

VickiAB: these are some great social studies resources!

JudithCo: This will be a good resource for our TAG teacher's project

VelvetteM: interesting

MegSt: What else can I tell you? What are your questions...? I know I would be remiss not to mention the American Presidents site...C-SPAN covers history as a way to provide context for current events

MichaelH: Meg, I should also ask about accessibility of the videos for either Real Player or Windows Media... or Mac or Windows platform

VickiAB: I have a question about the school bus tour

MegSt: American Presidents site is very popular with teachers
<http://www.americanpresidents.org/>

VickiAB: it is to be here in Houston March 4th...where can I go to see it?

MegSt: Good question...You can watch archived clips only via RealPlayer...you can watch C-SPAN live online via Real or Windows

JudithCo: If I have other questions later on, where can I get answers?

VickiAB: oh, so we can't actually go see it in person?

MichaelH: that's a good question, too, Meg!

MichaelH: Vicki, you should be able to see it live...

MegSt: I will have to get more detail about the location of the Bus from one of my colleagues...please just send me a short email after the session to msteele@c-span.org I

will get you all the details and I'm sure we can accommodate a visit no matter where the Bus is...

VickiAB: okay, great...thank you

MichaelH: Meg, they can also contact you via telephone, right?

VelvetteM: I have a tech question ...on this site: <http://www.c-span.org/classroom/govt/primary.asp> the video clips do not seem to be working... is that site currently under construction with the clips?

MegSt: Yes, we have an 800 number for educators 800 523 7586...we are set up to give as much personal, one on one service as we can so don't hesitate to call or write...

VickiAB: great!

MichaelH: Velvette, it's working on my computer...

VelvetteM: huh... interesting

MichaelH: but the video is very choppy

MichaelH: a lot of interference

MichaelH: is that what you're seeing?

MegSt: Hi Velvette...they should be working...I just checked them. You do need RealPlayer though...call us tomorrow btwn 830-530 ET and we can try to walk you through it...the quality does depend on the speed of your connection.

VelvetteM: ah okay...thank you!

VelvetteM: I will do that

MichaelH: Meg, I wonder too if it might be an issue where the connection might be slow because Velvette is also in TAPPED IN?

MichaelH: maybe causing the stream to be slow?

VelvetteM: good analysis

VelvetteM: I'm working on cable... it shouldn't make that much of a difference...correct?

MichaelH: I'm on a cable modem... I can see the clips, but there's a lot of interference... might be my copy of Real One Player.

MichaelH: But, Meg made a great point, she and the folks at C-SPAN in the Classroom are more than willing to help troubleshoot...

MegSt: Sure...watching online isn't always the best...but it's always getting better--the grant program and videotaping directly are strongly encouraged. Or better yet, have your student tape segments. If you sign up for the membership service, you will be kept informed about upcoming programs and can tape.

MegSt: Using C-SPAN takes some work--but the rewards teachers tell us are great as far as spurring critical thinking and viewing with students--show them a little in class, get them familiar with the style, and they will watch on their own. Seriously.

JudithCo: My connection is great. (cable modem) I am really looking forward to wandering through your website! I will be working on getting the bus to our school. Perhaps we can coordinate with other schools in our area. Thanks so much for taking the time to chat with us.

MichaelH: Meg, is there anything else you'd like to share or mention before we wrap things up?

VickiAB: yes, thank you for a great discussion

MegSt: Sure! Thank YOU! You are all on the cutting edge. When I taught, the internet was just getting started; I am in awe of what you do and what you attempt to do (both are so important).

MichaelH: Meg we certainly appreciate you taking time out of your schedule to join us tonight!

VelvetteM: yes.. thank you

VelvetteM: it was great

VelvetteM smiles

MichaelH: I hope all of you will sign up and get your map, too

VickiAB: of course!

JudithCo: will do!

MegSt: Alright, everyone get ready for Wisconsin...(next primary) Check out (and tape!) Road to the White House Sunday at 630-8 ET and you will get our "best" events from Wisconsin from over the weekend.

VelvetteM: lol yes!

MichaelH will be watching that edition closely

MegSt: Yes!

MichaelH: and it re-airs at 9 eastern, doesn't it, Meg?

MegSt: Re-airs at 930 ET...don't want to pre-empt Prime Minister's Questions!

VelvetteM: thanks for reminding me

MichaelH waves good night to all...