

**Title of Session:** Social Studies Forum

**Moderator:** Michael Hutchison

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**Herschels:** we're into testing time now, we have separate test taking classes and they have extended one class 20 minutes to teach test taking skills, its pretty disgusting and a big waste of time

**DianaAL:** I'm not sure they will ever get to testing them, but they say that is the future plan

**MichaelH :** so, you're teaching to the test?

**DianaAL:** I'm just a little overwhelmed with the size of the job... it's quite ridiculous

**MichaelH :** so, what are you teaching in 8th grade social studies, Diana?

**DianaAL:** right now it's US history beginnings -reconstruction... but the new standards would change that

**MichaelH :** how would that change, Diana?

**DianaAL:** it would make both the 7th and 8th grade years really more of a SS survey...

**DianaAL:** not really focused on one subject area, but rather pieces of all 5 areas-world, US, Geo, Civics and Econ

**Herschels:** that is a radical change, where will U.S. history be taught?

**DianaAL:** 5th and some of 7th and then again in 11th

**MichaelH :** so, it's sort of a "global studies" approach, Diana?

**DianaAL:** and they are introducing some really big concepts early in the elem. like Slavery and Asian religions in the 2nd grade, Aristotle, Plato and Socrates in 3rd... finally the Holocaust in 4th...

**MichaelH :** Wow, I wonder if some of that is a little early?

**AshK:** that's absurd

**DianaAL:** I look at it as an opportunity to teach thematically... the problem is that we don't have the resources to teach this stuff... and it will be adopted in May ...

**MichaelH :** Diana, what's going to be taught on the high school level?

**DianaAL:** all 5 areas have standards in the HS standards, but there are only three years required for graduation... so I am not sure how that will pan out

**MichaelH :** sounds like your high school teachers will really be "cramming"

**SusanR** joined the room.

**MichaelH** waves to Sue

**DianaAL:** to be sure...

**SusanR** waves back

**MichaelH :** there was an interesting discussion on another listserv this week, thought I'd fly it by you all...

**MichaelH :** maybe especially Ash, we need a younger teacher's perspective

**MichaelH :** the discussion concerned whether a teacher with a "social studies" license could be an effective history teacher

**DianaAL:** I'm going to have to duck out... dinner plans call...

**MichaelH :** Now, I say "yes", but that's partly because I am a social studies major. My degree is in social studies education

**HerschelS:** I read somewhere that 85% of history teachers are not history majors

**MichaelH** waves to Diana

**DianaAL** left the room (signed off).

**AshK:** many teachers of social studies I know don't have an in depth understanding of any historical period

**MichaelH :** Well, in my situation.... my uncle advised me to get the social studies degree because I would be more employable than with a history license

**MichaelH :** so, I can also teach government

**Herschels:** many of them have only taken general ed requirements in social studies in college, they have to learn on the job

**MichaelH :** I agree with that, Herschel, in my situation, I am licensed in World History, but it has been so long since I have really taught it that I have to really prep for it

**MichaelH :** US History is a breeze, but world is a little bit of a struggle... especially the first semester

**Herschels:** but you were trained in it

**AshK:** I worry about teachers not being knowledgeable in their content area because here in TX anyone with any degree can teach

**MichaelH :** right... but in my case, I taught world when I student taught, and didn't touch it again until the early 1990s

**MichaelH :** Do they get an emergency license, Ash?

**AshK:** I believe the process takes a year

**MichaelH :** once they get the license, is it good for a particular amount of time, or is it permanent?

**AshK:** it's permanent as far as I know

**AshK:** I've seen teachers come in from the business world with no understanding of how to teach young children

**MichaelH :** actually, I thought the discussion in the other listserv would be more teacher vs. coaching...

**MichaelH :** a lot of people always like to complain about social studies teachers because they tend to also coach

**MichaelH :** and of course, that's not true in all instances, but it's the typical stereotype

**AshK:** as long as there is no standardized test for SS, the principal's will consider it a low priority

**MichaelH :** Ash, what social studies are required in TX on the high school level? US? Government?

**AshK:** I will teach at the elementary level so I'm not exactly sure

**AshK:** I know that SS is taught "when there's time" in elementary schools

**MichaelH** : I bet you have to have US and Government... maybe Texas history?

**AshK**: right

**MichaelH** : In Indiana, students have to take US and Government (on the high school level), and some electives.

**MichaelH** : We (the high school) require World History, also

**MichaelH** : hey, before I forget....

**AshK**: in world history, in high school, I remember that we had a very euro-centric curriculum, we skipped over entirely the section about Asia

**AshK**: was that the case for anyone else?

**MichaelH** : Ash, I bet that was because whoever your teacher was, he/she probably didn't have much of a foundation in Asian history

**MichaelH** didn't do much with Asian history, either

**MichaelH** : are you all aware of the new Social-Studies listserv?

**AshK**: no

**MichaelH** : There used to be a social studies mailing list that was hosted by Classroom Connect, but they are dropping the list...

**MichaelH** : so...

**MichaelH** : TAPPED IN has graciously allowed the list to continue

**MichaelH** : it's easy to subscribe if you want to do that...

**MichaelH** : all you have to do is go to <http://ti2.sri.com/mailman/listinfo/social-studies>, and type your e-mail address and pick a password, and you're subscribed

**MichaelH** : OR....

**MichaelH** : send an e-mail to [social-studies-request@tappedin.org](mailto:social-studies-request@tappedin.org)

**MichaelH** : with the word SUBSCRIBE in the subject line or in the body of the message.

**MichaelH** : Nothing else

**MichaelH** : and, you're in

**MichaelH** : we had 950 subscribers in the old list, and we're slowly but steadily moving up in the new one

**MichaelH** : list traffic is usually pretty light, although we have had some days where we've had interesting discussions about social studies education topics

**AshK**: what are the benefits of being a subscriber

**MichaelH** : well, the list moderator tries really hard to share all sorts of resources that teachers on any grade level can use in their classrooms

**MichaelH** : Ash, is there a certain grade level (in elementary) you hope to be teaching?

**MichaelH** : or are teaching?

**AshK**: I would prefer the higher grades, 2nd or 3rd

**AshK**: I am a student teacher right now

**MichaelH** : oh, what grade?

**AshK**: in 3rd

**AshK**: I work with bilingual students at an inner city school

**MichaelH** : I bet it's an interesting experience... being a new teacher!

**AshK**: very eye opening

**MichaelH** : Just wait till you get your own classroom

**SusanR** . o O ( fondly recalls the thrill and joys and challenges of being a new teacher )

**MichaelH** : it's an experience, believe me

**MichaelH** : me too, Sue...

**AshK**: not to change the subject, but is there significant Hispanic immigration in Indiana

**MichaelH** : that was one of the worst parts of being a young teacher on the secondary level... no classroom... I traveled five periods per day

**MichaelH** : Ash, there is some, mainly migrant farm workers, and that's more in the warm months

**AshK:** how does that affect your instruction

**MichaelH :** well, to be honest, it doesn't affect high school much, but it probably does have more of an impact on the elementary level.

**MichaelH :** we have very few minority students in the entire district

**AshK:** where do you stand with regards to the multiculturalism debate?

**MichaelH :** in regard to teaching about minority groups in the classroom? Bilingual education?

**AshK:** the idea of not emphasizing the accomplishments of Western civilization as much, in order to allow for more time to discuss other civilizations' contributions to the world

**MichaelH :** we probably spend the most time (in US History) talking about the black Civil Rights movement... not much on Hispanics or other groups. We have very, very, very few language minority students in the district

**MichaelH :** oh, well, it's been a couple of years or so since I taught World History, but we usually are pretty Euro-centric in World History

**AshK:** Should we be?

**MichaelH :** I don't think so... but the problem is... especially with older teachers like me... it would be hard to give us the training in non-Western studies we would need to be able to teach it effectively

**MichaelH :** In my case, I'm in my 27th year as a teacher... and the way my license is... I don't have to go back for professional development. I have a life license

**AshK:** I ask because I feel that we, as a nation, are so ignorant of areas such as the Middle East

**MichaelH :** well, I think people will be studying that area of the world more... but my background in non-Western studies is really lacking

**MichaelH :** would you agree?

**DavidWe** joined the room.

**AshK:** yes

**MichaelH :** I think people will start taking more of an interest in that area of World History

**MichaelH** waves to David

**DavidWe**: hi

**AshK**: I feel that we should also start taking more of an interest in China NOW?

**MichaelH** : David, we're discussing the scope of teaching World History... about teachers being Euro-centric about the subject matter

**DavidWe** nods to Michael

**DavidWe** thinks eastward

**MichaelH** : Well, I think there's definitely something to that, also... maybe the bigger interest should be in North Korea....

**AshK**: I say China because it's the next superpower, but the entire region will become more and more important to us

**DavidWe** . o O ( India? )

**Herschels**: a future rival and enemy perhaps

**MichaelH** : I think it probably already has superpower status...

**DavidWe** . o O ( ...or friend )

**MichaelH** : Definitely has the population...

**DavidWe** . o O ( India may surpass China in population from what I understand )

**MichaelH** : I saw on CNN the other day that the most popular car make in China is a.....

**MichaelH** : Buick

**DavidWe** laughs

**DavidWe**: Lot of old Chinese people?

**Herschels**: I read that one reason we are allowing China to dominate our economy with the tremendous drain of dollars to them is they hope that if they become affluent capitalists they might become democratic

**DavidWe** smiles

**AshK:** right

**AshK:** we hope

**MichaelH :** Look at all the pirating of goods they do, also....

**Herschels:** every other nation protects its workers and industries except us,

**MichaelH :** that's always been historically true, Herschel...

**AshK:** how has outsourcing affected the upper Midwest?

**DavidWe:** Or any other manufacturing area?

**AshK:** are factories closing down like crazy

**MichaelH :** hmmm... we didn't have much industry here to begin with, but the state of Indiana got caught hiring out a lot of jobs to India...

**Herschels:** where I work there were huge auto plants etc. all gone now along with the high paying jobs

**MichaelH :** it was a bit of a campaign issue

**AshK:** really

**MichaelH :** we had a big shoe factory here for years... it's gone because of cheap imported shoes

**MichaelH :** that's where our shoe business went to

**MichaelH :** one of the biggest employers in town, just gone

**AshK:** so is the middle class really shrinking as much as is often being reported?

**DavidWe:** Where do you go to find the answer to that question, Ash?

**DavidWe** doesn't know

**MichaelH** isn't sure either

**AshK:** just interested in what's happening your parts of the world

**Herschels:** I know my salary has not kept up, everything else goes up

**DavidWe:** I think the wealthiest Americans are getting wealthier



**DavidWe** . o O ( tax cuts )

**MichaelH** : I think the big thing that is hurting us locally... is a major drug problem

**MichaelH** : meth is rampant around here

**DavidWe**: And in the northwest. I was in Washington state, Idaho, Oregon

**MichaelH** : and a lot of resources go to combat that

**DavidWe** wonders if the War on Drugs should be called off

**MichaelH** : well, here, it's getting a bit violent

**DavidWe**: What if it were legal?

**MichaelH** : we had a guy get killed in a shootout with police last week

**DavidWe** nods to Michael

**Herschels**: what a waste of money, illegal drugs destroy whole nations, we should legalize it tax drugs and give the money to schools. Its clear we cannot stop people from taking drugs, like prohibition in the 20's

**AshK**: we need to much more vigilant of our border with Mexico for a start

**DavidWe** appreciates Herschel's comments

**MichaelH** : he pulled out a semi-automatic and opened fire, and the police returned it

**DavidWe** . o O ( Lots of guns out there )

**Herschels**: hey, my school along with the rest of LA is 85% Mexican or other Hispanics

**DavidWe**: Which school is your school, Herschel?

**DavidWe**: I'm in New Jersey, near New York City

**Herschels**: Jordan high in south central LA

**DavidWe** nods

**AshK**: I work with Hispanics as well, and illegal immigration is out of control

**DavidWe**: What would you do about it, Ash, if you were king for a day?

**DavidWe** is very interested in this issue

**Herschels:** the "battle" has been lost, as the Mexican kids see we are taking back our land from you gringos who stole it in 1849

**AshK:** good question, I would fund a lot more, and better trained guards

**Herschels:** Actually there were around 8,000 Mexicans in all of California when we took it away

**DavidWe:** Should we build a big wall from San Diego to Laredo, Texas?

**Herschels:** Think of it this way, we have massive illegal immigration from Mexico while Europe has it from the Middle East and Africa etc. All in all I think we have the better deal

**AshK:** that's probably too costly and ineffective but a lot more enforcement is necessary

**DavidWe** . o O ( Brownsville, Texas, sorry )

**DavidWe:** Why do people risk their lives to cross the border?

**AshK:** for a better life

**DavidWe** nods

**DavidWe:** Naturally

**Herschels:** poverty and a chance for a better life

**MichaelH :** well, gang, we're about at the end of our hour...

**DavidWe** smiles

**Herschels:** bye

**MichaelH :** don't forget, for the next session, we have a special guest...

**SusanR:** Interesting chat!!

**AshK:** I agree

**DavidWe:** Always

**MichaelH :** Herschel's going to be our guest for that session...

**DavidWe:** Oh, cool. What's the topic?

**Herschels:** who me

**MichaelH :** that's March 23, 8 p.m. Eastern

**MichaelH :** yep

**SusanR** listens intently

**MichaelH :** Herschel is going to talk about GIS...

**MichaelH :** Herschel, want to give them a sneak peek at your topic?

**DavidWe:** Neat

**Herschels:** GIS, it's really a revolutionary software that can change how we teach social studies

**SusanR:** GIS ???

**SusanR:** stands for

**DavidWe:** Geographic Information Systems

**Herschels:** <http://www.hmsgis.multimedialearning.org/>

**Herschels:** my website for gis

**DavidWe:** Neat, I'll take a look

**MichaelH :** so, be sure to join us for our next episode to learn more about GIS, and how it can change your teaching

**DavidWe .** o O ( and change your LIFE )

**MichaelH** needs to call it a night... Molly's home, and I have to get up way early tomorrow

**DavidWe** waves night to Michael and Molly

**AshK:** buenas noches

**MichaelH** waves to all

**DavidWe:** Ciao

**HerschelS:** see ya next week

**MichaelH :** March 23