

Title of Session: LOC Learning Page Chat-Government, Citizenship, and the Nation's Constitution

Moderator: Leni Donlan

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LeniD: Well, it's a small group but let's begin.

MichaelH: ok... didn't know whether we might start or hold off a bit

LeniD: Hello Cynthia:-) Welcome.

LeniD: Welcome to the first Learning Page monthly chat of the new school year! Thank you for joining us, tonight.

LeniD: Michael would you like to do the introduction honors?

LeniD: Hi, Jeff

MichaelH: sure thing, Leni

LeniD: Thanks.

MichaelH: Let's start tonight's session with everyone telling everyone who we are and where we're from

MichaelH is a social studies teacher in southwestern Indiana

BJB2: I'm an art teacher in Pennsylvania and a big LOC fan

CynthiaSA: I'm a school media specialist and sometime college prof from Detroit

EllieW: Ellie is an Elementary Librarian from New Hampshire

LeniD: Leni Donlan - longtime teacher and promoter of technology in education - now the coordinator of the Learning Page Project at the Library of Congress.

JeffC: helpdesk here... career educator... Forest Grove, Oregon

LeniD: It really IS nice to have you all here... I love the beginning of a new school year

LeniD: Here's something to ponder...

LeniD: Our Constitution is color-blind, and neither knows nor tolerates classes among citizens. In respect of civil rights, all citizens are equal before the law. The humblest is the peer of the most powerful.

LeniD: ~John Marshall Harlan (Dissenting opinion in Plessy v. Ferguson, 1896)

LeniD: Do you agree? Disagree?

MichaelH: we've been discussing rule of law in government class recently, Leni

MichaelH: my students seem to think that the rich and privileged do better in the legal system than the poor and minorities

DavidWe . o O (David Weksler - long-time Tapped In user and technology enthusiast)

LeniD: I think many classrooms are discussing law these days. Thanks, David

LeniD: What do you think your students might think about this?

CynthiaSA: Many of my students are from the Middle East, and seem to think it is better that way here than there.

MichaelH: I think they probably look at things in terms of how the law treats THEM... I don't know how accurate the assessment is, but they always seem to have stories about "how so and so got off, and they got a ticket", or whatever

LeniD: Good point, Cynthia.

LeniD: Ah, a "self-centric" view of the law, eh Michael?

LeniD: What might your students think about this quote?

MichaelH: yes, Leni... I agree with the centric view

CynthiaSA: A theory.. not really practice.

MichaelH: We haven't talked about civil rights yet, but I think my kids might tend to be cynical of Harlan's comment

LeniD: "In the long-run, every government is the exact symbol of its People, with their wisdom and unwisdom." ~ Thomas Carlyle

LeniD: I think many people might be cynical about Harlan's sentiment right now.

MichaelH: I'd not heard this one before, but I think it makes sense...

MichaelH: I think the recent Pledge of Allegiance decision sort of mirrors that one

LeniD: Yes, it does make sense.

LeniD: Oh? Why do you cite the pledge decision, Michael? I was surprised by it.

MichaelH: We want to be a patriotic people, but yet we have a continuing debate about outward expression of it

SusanR joined the room.

MichaelH: It was interesting... we do the pledge daily... and for the first time today, I had three students who wouldn't stand

LeniD: Welcome, Susan.

MichaelH: of course, I can't FORCE them to stand... but I am concerned about what might happen if one of the building administrators walked by my room and saw that

SusanR: Hi Leni

LeniD: I'm old enough to remember when the words "Under God" were introduced to the pledge. I

LeniD: There were dissenters then, too.

LeniD: Tonight, I'd like to talk about your plans for the teaching requirements for Constitution Day, as well as share some resources the Learning Page staff has prepared for you.

MichaelH: Right... of course, the major Pledge cases were decided BEFORE "under God" was added

LeniD: Yep.

MichaelH listens up to what Leni has to say

LeniD: Soooo.... what ARE you planning to do in your classroom or your school?

LeniD: How will you observe Constitution Day?

MichaelH: we have an early dismissal for in-service tomorrow, and I doubt if we do anything that is an outward commemoration

LeniD: We have had a number of teachers write to us asking for help with this. Ellie and Cynthia, what about you?

LeniD: Interesting, Michael!

CynthiaSA: I'm a media specialist at a K-8 school, so I've assembled videos and weblinks and passed them to the teachers already.

LeniD: I see.

MichaelH wonders if the commemoration specifically has to be on September 16?

LeniD: I don't know, Michael. I don't recall a mandated date... just a requirement to teach about the Constitution at this time of the school year.

LeniD: I want to share with your our community centers on the Learning Page...

LeniD: We think we were moving in the right direction when we created our Community Centers. Gathering resources about a theme or topic in one place seems to be well received.

LeniD: If you haven't used our community centers, take a quick look at the themes available. Scroll down the page and dig into one to see what you think.

LeniD: <http://www.loc.gov/learn/community/index.html>

MichaelH reminds all to take a quick peek, but be sure to come back here for more discussion

LeniD: Thanks, Michael!

EllieW: It can be Friday or Monday. We have to do something. Since our school is involved in testing we are keeping it simple and all saying the Preamble at 2pm. I'm sharing books and web sites. Just picked up 2 more copies of "We the Kids"

MichaelH: also, you may have to disable your pop-up blocker if you have one

LeniD: Good plan, Ellie.

LeniD: We think the community centers work well for teachers who want to use the Library's resources but may not have the time to ferret out the gems we have found for you.

LeniD: Let's take a look at some that might be particularly useful when teaching about government and the Constitution of the United States...

LeniD: A special presentation from the “A Century of Law Making” collection...

LeniD: American History as Seen in Congressional Documents, 1774-1873

EllieW: As an aside maybe the way to recognize the day for older students is to organize a debate on the constitutionality of requiring a constitutional observance.

LeniD: <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/ammem/amlaw/lwtl.html>

LeniD: LOL...I wondered who would bring that up, Ellie.

EllieW: moving right along...

BJB2: Michael, that sounds like the civil rights forum

MichaelH: yep, BJ

LeniD: that would be a truly engaging way to think about the meaning of the constitution.

BJB2 . o O (maybe we should plan on something like that for next year)

LeniD: I'll help! A live event would be terrific!

LeniD: From the Learning Page's Feature, “American Memory Timeline”...

LeniD: The United States Constitution

LeniD: <http://memory.loc.gov/learn/features/timeline/newnatn/usconst/consmenu.html>

MichaelH: we could do it, Leni!

LeniD: Yep

LeniD: Another wonderful collection of resources you shouldn't miss...

LeniD: Primary Documents in American History...

LeniD: links to resources from throughout the Library of Congress and to excellent sources outside of the Library...

LeniD: <http://www.loc.gov/rr/program/bib/ourdocs/Constitution.html>

LeniD: Poke around for a few minutes in the collected resources of the “We the People” community center...

LeniD: Don't miss the lesson plans and collections connections!

LeniD: http://memory.loc.gov/learn/community/cc_wethepeople.php

LeniD: Sometimes, however you need something that you can download and use immediately.

LeniD: With this first featured community center of the 2005-2006 school year, we are introducing something new.

LeniD: We have prepared primary resources that you can download, print out or play for your students - tomorrow!

LeniD: Take a look...

LeniD: http://www.loc.gov/learn/community/cc_wethepeople_kit.php

BJB2: wow!

MichaelH: this is cool

LeniD: Did you find something you can use?

DavidWe: very impressive, Leni. Someone deserves congratulations for that

LeniD: Thank you

MichaelH: Well, Leni, I could list all the stuff I could use, but we only have an hour

DavidWe smiles

LeniD: Ellie, are there things here you would be able to use at the elementary level?

LeniD: Cynthia and Ellie... will this work for you?

LeniD: We would love your feedback. Is this document set useful? Why?

MichaelH: I think the primary sources are great, Leni

LeniD: They are in PDF format at high dpi...

CynthiaSA: This would be great for my middle school teachers.

LeniD: so when you print them out, you can do a great document analysis lesson.

LeniD: Good, Cynthia!

CynthiaSA: I think I will email them a link tonight.

LeniD: Great

MichaelH: Leni, I'm downloading the Bill of Rights broadside right now... is there a way to enlarge that to poster size?

LeniD: Don't miss the last link...the tools.

LeniD: Michael, you can do that yourself... and I would be happy to send you instructions.

LeniD: We did this sort of thing at our summer institute.

MichaelH: Thanks, Leni... we actually start 1st Amendment Monday, and this would be cool (besides I need posters in my classroom anyway!)

LeniD: However, for the document sets, we are making it as easy for a teacher/librarian as possible... immediate, good quality printout without muss or fuss.

LeniD: What would you like to see in future document sets?

BJB2: the political cartoons

BJB2: and the branding of America

MichaelH: yes, that would be good, Leni!

LeniD: Yep... we couldn't find that would work for this one, BJ...too abrasive...

LeniD: but we are using one in the next set.

LeniD: Is it a good mix of documents, images and multimedia? Will it engage your students?

DavidWe certainly hopes so

LeniD: So do we!

MichaelH: I think it's a good mix, Leni. I haven't checked the sound files, but I think that's a nice touch

LeniD: Cynthia and Ellie - will your teachers be able to use the multimedia resources?

CynthiaSA: In my school, yes.

MichaelH: I wondered if you'd considered adding anything from the Federalist Papers or from the minutes from the Philadelphia convention?

LeniD: Michael, we considered a good deal... including those items... narrowed it down to this very focused set about the "Constitution"...

DavidWe has been carrying around his pocket-sized copy of The Constitution

LeniD: would broader be better?

DavidWe: National Constitution Center is a pretty neat place

DavidWe . o O (in Philly)

LeniD: Yes, we got ours, too, David It's actually pretty cool!

LeniD: Yep... it is.

CynthiaSA: Too much might be overwhelming to teachers.

DavidWe smiles

LeniD: Our thought as well, Cynthia. This seemed like a good number to us.

LeniD: If you have other suggestions or feedback we would love to hear from you (ldon@loc.gov)

LeniD: As the 2005-2006 school year unfolds, we will be updating some of the community centers you see now, and adding some rich new ones, such as...

MichaelH listens attentively

LeniD: Early America

LeniD: The Great Depression...

EllieW: I'm afraid our technology is not reliable enough for the teachers to count on using it for a lesson. On top of that I think the learning curve is so steep that they don't try. Remember we only go through 6th grade.

LeniD: Ellie, the documents and images in this set are intended to be printed out and used in the classroom. Would that work?

LeniD: Religion in America... and more!

CynthiaSA: Sounds exciting!

MichaelH: Leni, when will the Religion in America center go up?

LeniD: Near the end of the school year, Michael.

LeniD: I'm building a new Feature Presentation on that...the community center will be published in late spring, as well.

MichaelH: I'm in the middle of doing some PBS lessons, and I thought there might be something there I could use.

CynthiaSA: How about Early America. I'd really like to use it with my 5th grade teachers.

LeniD: BJ and Jeff have shown me the wonders of holding our chats in a "group room"...

MichaelH: Lessons are on immigration, and one of the themes deals with "freedom to worship"

LeniD: Early American will be in November, Cynthia.

MichaelH: we used the SSF room last night for my session, Leni, worked very, very well

LeniD: Ahh...good tie in, Michael.

LeniD: We will put handouts and tools in this room, as well, so that you can download them. If you have articles and suggestions, we hope you will share them here.

LeniD: So... moving away from the mic...

BJB2: ok...good time to tell people how to join the group

MichaelH: I think that's a great idea, Leni... a central TI location....

MichaelH is all ears

LeniD: Please, Bj!

BJB2: look on the screen above this chat window or reattach your chat

BJB2: scroll down on the welcome note to THIS IS THE GROUP ROOM FOR LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

BJB2: with a green i next to Library of Congress

BJB2: click on the green i

BJB2: that will give you the group ID page with a place to join the group in the top left of the screen

BJB2: the advantage to joining the group is that you will be able to post to the discussion board and will receive reminders of Leni's events (since she'll remember to send them)

LeniD: Sure will

MichaelH: Leni, you are always welcome to post in the SSF room too...

LeniD: BJ, would you explain how to make this room a "favorite" for easy return?

BJB2: once you've joined the group, the group will be added to your favorite places menu

LeniD: Thanks, Michael!

MichaelH: as well to the SSForum and Social Studies listserv

LeniD: Thanks, again, Michael

LeniD: We hope you will join us for the October Learning Page chat. Our topic is "The People...Native Americans."

LeniD: We are building a document set for October, now!

LeniD: We will look for you on...

BJB2: coolness, Leni! The date is October 20

DavidWe: The President is speaking at the top of the hour, I believe

MichaelH: yep, can't wait to hear what he'll say

MichaelH: he's supposed to announce a major rebuilding plan for N.O. that the Federal Government will fund

LeniD: Thursday, October 20 at 8:00 PM, ET

LeniD: Tonight?

MichaelH: yes, in about five minutes

MichaelH: he's speaking from the French Quarter

CynthiaSA: Thanks, It was great

DavidWe nods

LeniD: Ahhh... thanks. This would be a good time to close, then.

MichaelH waves goodnight

DavidWe: Goodnight, Michael

DavidWe: Thanks, Leni

BJB2 hugs...thanks, Leni!

LeniD: Night all... thanks for joining in.