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Current Event Integration to Facilitate Historical Concept Literacy

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Current Event Integration to Facilitate Historical Concept Literacy

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Research Question

How can current events be integrated in high school history curriculum to facilitate and develop historical concept literacy?

Literature Review

- “The most important aspect of learning in social studies consists of identifying concepts which students can use as aids in thinking through solutions to present-day problems” (Deikan & Haligas, 1966).
- Students need to grasp the existence and importance of differing perspectives if they are to be able to understand historical issues (Levstik & Barton, 2005).
- Online discussion boards allow students to discuss historical sources in a modern context (Luckhardt, 2014).
- Recent history allows students to contextualize the topic within their modern perspectives (Mosborg & Toledo, 2009).

Methodology

- 3 freshman World History classes; 2 sophomore American History classes
- 5 lessons taught during a semester of student teaching
- Student work and field notes are used to assess historical concept literacy development.

Lesson Plans

Lesson 1: Fear Mongering and ISIS News

- Fox News ISIS video supplements learning of fear mongering

Lesson 2: Espionage/Sedition and NSA Political Cartoon

- Political cartoon on NSA surveillance programs introduces espionage and sedition in post-WWI United States

Lesson 3: Martial Law and Thailand News

- Thailand martial law news video supplements learning of martial law under Robespierre in France

Lesson 4: Absolutism and North Korea Documentary

- North Korea documentary introduces students to absolutism before European Monarchs of 1800’s

Lesson 5: Cultural Blending and Tibet News

- Tibet news video supplements learning of cultural blending in China during the Ming Dynasty

Results and Data Analysis

- Current event integration needs a formal assessment to accurately judge literacy development.
- Current events as supplements need direct, guided connections to historical content.
- Introducing the concept through current events facilitates student inquiry and positive engagement.
- Students did not often use the concept, but did correctly refer to the concept.
- Findings confirm existing literature regarding current events facilitating historical discussions (Luckhardt, 2014).

Conclusion

- Current events facilitate engagement with historical concepts which has a positive correlation with literacy development.
- Historical concept literacy needs more development in history curriculum.
- Future research should track historical concept literacy development over time to assess growth using current events.