

MCSS NEWLETTER

Mississippi Council for the Social Studies



Heading to Hattiesburg!

The MCSS 2016 Fall Conference to be held on the campus of the University of Southern Mississippi: **October 20 & 21, 2016**

The Mississippi Council for the Social Studies is excited to announce that the 2016 Fall Conference will be held in Hattiesburg on October 20-21, 2016! The beautiful campus at the University of Southern Mississippi will host this fall's conference. Conference sessions will be held at the state-of-the-art Thad Cochran Center on Thursday, October 20 and Friday, October 21, 2016. The theme for the annual conference is: "Beyond College, Career and Civic Life: Social Studies That Inspires." Register for the Conference at: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/mississippi-council-for-the-social-studies-fall-conference-2016-tickets-24256599141>.

1

2016 FALL CONFERENCE

Hattiesburg on
October 20 &
21, 2016

2

MDAH PDO

Apply now!

3

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Please
participate in
our survey!

4

LESSON LAUNCH!

A social studies
teaching tip!

"Liberty may be endangered by the abuses of liberty, as well as by the abuses of power."

James Madison

MCSS 2016 Fall Conference Theme:

"Beyond College, Career and Civic Life: Social Studies That Inspires"

"Plan the extraordinary in your curriculum; the ordinary will always find a place."

Herman B. Wells

The MCSS website:
mcss.org.msstate.edu

Professional Development Opportunities through MDAH

For those of you looking ahead to summer vacation, Mississippi Department of Archives and History(MDAH) is now accepting applications for its Second Annual Summer Teachers School focusing on teaching complex civil and

human rights in Mississippi. Held in Jackson from June 20-24, 2016, this research-intensive workshop will provide teachers with an opportunity to investigate a topic of their choice, locate primary resources related to it in the state archives, and write a lesson plan featuring their findings. Completed lessons are posted on the MDAH website. A \$40 application fee is required upon acceptance to the workshop. Lunches, housing (for those outside the Jackson metro area), stipend, and all materials are provided. 3 CEU credits are available through Mississippi College.

Visit <http://mdah.state.ms.us/new/learn/teachers/professional-development/> to register.



2015 FALL CONFERENCE IN JACKSON, MS

The MCSS Fall 2015 Conference was held at the Old Capitol Museum in Jackson, Mississippi. The theme of the conference was “Social Studies in Mississippi: College, Career, and Civic Life (C3)”.

The conference included a memorable address by Dr. Michael V. Williams, Dean of Social Sciences at Tougaloo College, about Medgar Evers and his life’s relevance to the greater purposes of the social studies. The following individuals were also inducted into the Mississippi Social Studies Educators’ Hall of Fame: Kathy Farmer, Martha Hutson, Dr. Jesse McKee, Bert Nokes, and Carol Paola.

Thank you to all who planned, sponsored, or presented at the conference!

(Picture to the right: Dr. Kenneth Anthony presents on the importance of mythology and hero stories in the social studies classroom)



President's Message

Greetings fellow Social Studies enthusiasts! In 2016 we are gearing up for our state's bicentennial in 2017, we are entering into an election year and have just exited one of the most difficult years for racial riots and protests since potentially the late nineteen teens (1919-1921) and the late nineteen sixties (1965-1972). With everything from religious freedom bills to controversy over the Confederate Flag, our students, more than ever, need your instruction and need you to help them provide a historical framework for how to think through these issues. We have also entered a period where investment in STEM is at an all-time high and our nation's leaders are looking to science and technology for the answers. What folks sometimes fail to realize is that technology can give the ability to do something, but social studies gives you the wisdom to know if you should do something with that technology and how you should do it. I want to encourage you that you are needed now more than ever and the Mississippi Council for the Social Studies wants to do everything in its power to help provide the tools you need to continue to be a successful classroom social studies teacher.

As an organization we want to invest in both current teachers and future Social Studies teachers. In November we had a successful MCSS conference at the Old Capital building in Jackson with Dr. Michael V. Williams, Professor of History at Tougaloo College and expert on Medgar Evers, presenting the keynote. This February, the MCSS hosted a very successful preservice teacher "Winter Workshop" at the University of Mississippi. Dickie Scruggs, of Second Chance Mississippi, served as the keynote and we had several preservice teachers come to panels on effective Social Studies instruction. I would ask that you please mark your calendars for our annual conference for this coming Fall. It will be on Thursday and Friday of October 20th and 21st at the Thad Cochran Center on the beautiful campus of the University of Southern Mississippi in Hattiesburg. This year's conference theme will focus on how we can inspire our students and how we can even move beyond preparing our students for civic, career and college

preparation. We want to focus on ways we can inspire through social studies instruction to care about our fellow man, to have empathy, to be wise and make sound decisions, to motivate our students to make a difference and to go out into our society with with eyes to see and ears to hear.

In order for us to plan effectively, we will need your help. The first thing we need you to do is to fill out a very brief survey that will be sent out in the next few weeks. This survey will give us a sense of what kinds of topics you would like to see at the next conference. What sort of issues are you struggling with? What content do you need to know more about? We want to do everything we can to assist you and support you. Please let us know by filling out this brief survey (<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/HVFAQ6CB>) or you can always feel free to contact me and let me know. You will also be able to find the survey and most information about the organization on our MCSS Facebook Page (<https://www.facebook.com/MsCouncilForTheSocialStudies/>). Also, we will be having a contest this year for most inspiring and effective Social Studies lesson plans. There will be categories for history, economics, geography, civics and government and sociology/psychology as well as middle and high school categories. We want to do more to recognize great teaching as well as help disseminate great ideas for instruction. In the next few weeks you will see a call to submit lesson plans. A committee of college faculty and social studies teachers will evaluate the plans. Please consider submitting for this contest and then come to the conference in October to share those ideas with others.

Finally, I would ask that you please contact me at owpickett@mc.edu if there is ever anything I can do for you and if there is anything you think we at the MCSS could do to better serve you in any way. Thank you all for your amazing work, and I hope to see you in Hattiesburg in October!

Best,

Otis W. Pickett

2016-2017 President of the Mississippi Council for the Social Studies

Lesson

Launch:

Social Studies
Teaching Tips!



Powerpoint Challenge!

By Dr. Paul E. Binford

Begin (or end) your next class with a “Powerpoint Challenge”!

Select a top ten list that is relevant to your subject area (e.g., the ten states with the most electoral votes for US Government, or the ten largest nations based on land size or territory for World Geography, or the ten nations with the highest per capita income for Economics, etc.).

Using the electoral vote challenge as an example, the first step is to create a Powerpoint slide instructing students to stand by the sign of the state with the largest number of electoral votes, (i.e., California). Then create a slide that reveals the correct state (also include an outline map of the state and the state’s electoral vote count). Continue to create two slides for all ten states. Finally, create and randomly post signs for each of the ten states around your classroom.

When students enter your classroom tomorrow, have the first Powerpoint slide posted on the screen. Once all your students have stood next to the state they believe is the correct answer, then, reveal the next slide with the correct state. The students who stood by the sign with “California” continue on to the next round, while the students who stood by the incorrect signs must sit down. Continue through the remaining slides until every student is eliminated or all ten states are revealed.

To give you a head start, here are the ten states with the most electoral votes (their electoral vote totals are in parentheses):

- *California (55)
- Texas (38)
- Florida (29)
- New York (29)
- Illinois (20)
- Pennsylvania (20)
- Ohio (18)
- Georgia (18)
- Michigan (16)
- North Carolina (15)

(*www.archives.gov/federal-register/electoral-college/allocation.html)

For this ready to use Powerpoint Challenge (or others), please contact the author at peb137@msstate.edu!

2015 Jessie Palmer Award Recipient is Steven White!



Congratulations to Steven White the 2015 recipient of the Jesse Palmer Award!

This award is given each year to an educator who demonstrates exemplary knowledge, skills, and dispositions in promoting quality social studies education in Mississippi schools. White was honored at the State Capitol building on March 31, 2016.

**MISSISSIPPI COUNCIL FOR THE SOCIAL STUDIES
FALL CONFERENCE REGISTRATION AND MEMBERSHIP FORM**

Conference Theme: Beyond College, Career and Civic Life: Social Studies That Inspires: Common Core, C3 and Citizenship
**University of Southern Mississippi (Thad Cochran Center), Hattiesburg, Mississippi
October 20-21, 2016**

Name _____

Street Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Day Telephone _____ Evening Telephone _____

E-mail Address _____

Check One: Elementary School Teacher Middle School Teacher Secondary School Teacher
 College Instructor University Professor Pre-Service Teacher
 School Administrator Vendor Other

Circle the Congressional District in which you vote: CD 1 CD 2 CD 3 CD 4

SELECT ONE OF THE FOLLOWING OPTIONS:

I. Conference Pre-Registration (October 1 postmark deadline): _____
To pre-register for the conference, enter \$70.00 on this line.
(Note: Lifetime MCSS Members enter **\$45.**)

II. Conference Registration (after October 1): _____
To register by mail after October 1 or to register on site, enter **\$80** on this line.
(Note: Lifetime MCSS members enter **\$55.**)

III. Payment of Membership Dues: _____
Renew your membership for \$5.00 (separate from conference fee).

***** Please note: Conference registration includes the welcome reception on Thursday evening, all conference sessions, the luncheon and business meeting on Friday.**

SAVE TIME!! You can also register online at: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/mississippi-council-for-the-social-studies-fall-conference-2016-tickets-24256599141>

Mail this form along with a check, money order, or pre-approved purchase order to:

MARLO HENDRIX, MCSS TREASURER
159 HIGH FOREST LANE
TUPELO, MS 38801

**** Checks, money orders, and purchase orders must be made payable to MCSS. ****

IMPORTANT REMINDERS:

- To pay by purchase order, a pre-approved purchase order must accompany your registration form when it is submitted to the Treasurer. There are no exceptions to this policy.**
- Requests for cancellation of registration and refund of monies paid must be made in writing to the MCSS Treasurer two weeks prior to the conference.**

From the Scholar's Desk:



Teaching or Teaching the Test?

By Dr. Kenneth Anthony

Tis the season for testing. All across the state US history teachers are preparing their students for the US history test. Teachers and administrators are asking the question: "How do we most effectively prepare our students for the US history test?" But I think that this is the wrong question. The question we should be asking is, "How do we best teach our students US history?" If we do a quality job of teaching our students history it follows they will do well on the US history test.

We are constantly told that we should use data to make instructional and education decisions. I have followed that advice and looked at the 12th grade US history results from the 2010 National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP) (available at <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/>). I analyzed the data to see the effect of a variety of teaching strategies that teachers and schools participating in the NAEP report.

Before I share what I found, I'd like you to do a self-test. Below I have listed 12 teaching strategies mentioned in the NAEP data. Rank these methods from high to low according to which you think would be the most effective:

- Discuss materials studied
- Give presentation to the class (students)
- Read extra material not in the text book
- Read material from a text book
- Focus on preparation for state assessments
- Work on group project for history or social studies
- Watch movies or videos for history or social studies
- Use letters, diaries, or essays by historical people
- Do research using a CD or the internet
- Offer help through before and after school programs
- Go on field trips or have outside speakers
- Offer help through extra work or homework

Now in a way this was a trick question, because most of these strategies work well as measured by scores on the US history NAEP, it just depends on how often you use them. There can be too much of a good thing when it comes to teaching. Below are three charts that include the teaching strategies above with the resulting NAEP score for how often a particular strategy is used. I have bolded the highest score for each method. The average national score was 288. As you look through the chart, identify what strategies and time factors result in scores above and below the national average. I have included some commentary on what I have learned from the data about instruction, but I encourage you to study and draw your own conclusions.

Strategy	Never	A few times a year	Once or twice a month	Once or twice a week	Almost every day
Discuss material studied	259	266	274	285	296
Give presentation to the class	283	295	287	274	259
Go on field trips or have outside speakers	289	292	270	261	247
Read extra material not in textbook	276	287	292	292	290
Read material from a textbook	272	277	287	291	292
Use letters, dairies, or essays by historical people	278	291	293	293	280
Watch movies or videos for history or social studies	274	292	292	285	269
Work on group project for history or social studies	285	296	288	279	264

Strategy	Not at all	Small extent	Moderate extent	Large extent
Do research using a CD or the internet	271	285	290	301
Focus on preparation for state assessments	292	286	289	286

Strategy	Yes	No
Offer help through before or after school programs	286	293
Offer help through extra work or homework	288	294

Of interest to me are the things that when done almost every day are associated with higher test scores including discussion of material studied, reading material from a text book, and doing research on the internet. In this era when we tend to focus on how to leverage technology for instructional purposes those teachers who report that they have students read from the text book every day have higher test scores than those who “never” have students read from text books or who have students read from text books a few times a year, or once or twice a month. In our efforts to be relevant, interesting teachers (and also motivated by “experts”), many schools have abandoned the textbook, but maybe that’s a bad idea. Now I’m not advocating only using the textbook, but from a common sense approach it makes no sense to throw out textbooks because it is the largest single source of reliable information available and the source of the test makers’ questions.

I think if we look closely at the charts above we find that using text books in conjunction with some other strategies result in higher levels of learning as measured by the NAEP US history test. Some of the other strategies that are associated with higher NAEP scores are reading extra material not in the textbook; using letters, diaries, or essays by historical people (primary sources); and watching movies or videos for history of social studies when done once or twice a month or once or twice a week (see the tables). Another group of strategies appear to be associated with increased learning when done only a few times per year: giving presentations to the class, going on field trips or having outside speakers, and working on group projects for history or social studies.

What is great about this information is that each strategy is something that teachers can control (with support from school and district

administration). They are proactive strategies that teachers and schools can use to improve student achievement in US history and are applicable to other grade levels. An analysis of the data for grades 4 and 8 indicate similar results. What about reactive measures? How do efforts to prepare for the state tests impact student performance?

The bottom two charts include questions that focus on preparing for state tests and remediation. It appears that a focus on preparation for state assessments is inversely related to student achievement. Put another way, if you focus on the test rather than focus on teaching, student achievement is lower. If a teacher only focuses on preparation a few times a year student achievement increases. Why is this so? It might be because teachers who are focusing on preparing for the test are not teaching or using the other strategies associated with student achievement. What about efforts to remediate using before and after school programs or through extra work and homework? Again, there is an inverse relationship between these remediation efforts and success.

So what can we learn from this data? I think the most important thing is that good teaching and strategic choices about teaching strategies including a proper mix of strategies is a good way to increase student achievement. Waiting until students are behind and remediating is ineffective and replacing quality teaching with a test preparation curriculum is equally ineffective. Bringing in consultants to mine the QDI data and target specific students for score increases, plugging students into the computer to drill them on history facts, and weekly practice tests are no replacement for good teaching.

So what do we do with this information? We claim we make decisions based on the data.

Well, NAEP provides us with a wealth of data from across the nation. The students tested are a nationally representative sample. 500 schools and 12,400 students took the NAEP US history assessment. The results of the 2010 NAEP challenge many of the educational practices in US history classes in Mississippi. I encourage you to think about your practice as a social studies teacher. What methods and strategies do you use? Are they supported by data? Are you relying on one or two methods or strategies because you are comfortable with them or believe that they are best for your students? Have you abandoned the text book? How often do you focus on the US history test?

If I take anything from this data, it's that teachers can make a difference. Teachers must teach and must make wise decisions on how to use their limited instructional time wisely. The NAEP data should challenge our ideas about the best use of instructional time and the value of large amounts of test preparation. Though I have focused on 12th grade US history, similar trends are found in other subjects including reading and math. Not only does this data call into question our instructional strategies in the social studies, but also in other subjects.

The Mississippi Council for the Social Studies would like to express its appreciation to the following organizations for their invaluable support:

Mississippi Geographic Alliance

Mississippi Council on Economic Education

Thank you!

If you have an idea for the “**Lesson Launch**” practitioner’s column or a perspective on social studies related research for the “**From the Scholar’s Desk**” article, please forward your manuscript to the MCSS Newsletter Editor (peb137@msstate.edu).

The newsletter is published bi-annually in the spring and fall. To be considered for the spring and fall issues, your manuscript should be submitted for editorial review **no later than February 15 or September 15.**

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The **Mississippi Council for the Social Studies** is a state affiliate of the National Council for the Social Studies. The purpose of this organization is to promote social studies as the key subject in developing good citizenship, to provide a link among educators interested in social studies and to aid the development of social studies educators professionally.