

Supersizing Social Studies

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Incorporating technology into our classrooms is almost unavoidable at this point in our lives. Students are often now given laptops to use during school hours, some schools allow for the students to take them home. There are now hundreds of websites for educators to use to assist them in teaching their curriculum. For this assignment I have chosen to look at PBS NewsHour, and how it could be used in a classroom.

This website has daily articles on different subjects within the topic of social studies. Depending on the world's current affairs, the topics can range from politics, economy, world, and nation. On particular days there can be more than one story put on the website, after reading a few of the articles they seem to be rather unbiased and out to inform the public, instead of swaying their thought. PBS NewsHour also offers series, these series are grouped together articles that are directed at the particular topic, such as The Plastic Problem, The Mueller Files, and Making Sen\$e. As a social studies teacher, not only would this be good to read to keep yourself up to date on current political issues, but also share with the students. The diversity of social studies topics allows for the teachers to get relevant current information within a short period of time.

Teachers could easily share this with their students and weave it into the classroom by having the webpage opened every day when the students enter the classroom. They could dedicate the first five minutes of class each day to reading about the chosen article and briefly discussing it in class. Students could be asked how it connects to past articles they have read or clarify any questions it may raise. Keeping students aware of current issues within our society makes them productive citizens. A specific lesson aimed directly at PBS NewsHour would be to have each student chose an article, they all must have their own. To read the transcript

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thoroughly and then decide whether or not they support the topic at hand. Additional information from credited sources would then be required by the students to further promote their feelings on the situation. Students would be asked to give an oral report of what they read and concluded, presentation aids may be included, but not necessary. This allows for students to formulate their own opinions on topics. Yet, the additional research will help students realize whether or not their opinion is supported further than this one website. It also helps students learn that one thing you may read might not have all the information, other sites or interviews may shed light onto other parts of the subject they had yet to discover. A lesson like this asks the students to dive deeper into technology, finding and knowing what sources they can and cannot trust.

Presentation aids, such as a slide show or a graph can help further the point that the student had been attempting to make. Visual aids can not only help the presenter, but the audience may be able to grasp the point made by their fellow peer.

Howard Gardner has presented us with the theory of multiple intelligences, but also the Five Minds for the future. It is aimed to help students become for abstract in their thoughts, both educationally and socially. Gardener poses the five as disciplinary, synthesizing, creating, respectful, and ethical. If students add these to their toolbox they will have a greater chance to solve and comprehend issues that are given to them. The lesson that I presented earlier in this essay touches upon each of these five, it especially highlights the first three. In regards to disciplinary the project requires the student to have a deeper knowledge of the topic. Students cannot just say whether or not they agree with the article they are asked to provide further information that supports the conclusion they have drawn. Finding evidence that supports and strengthens your article, shows the student understands what they are promoting. Synthesizing

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builds off of disciplinary, the children must be able to connect and convey what their topic means correctly to their peers. This may require simplifying down in order for the individual to build up to more in depth analysis of the article or affects in the greater community. Creating asks the student to challenge their minds, find new solutions to the issue or creating questions that test the statement. Activating the students brain and requiring them to push limits helps keep ideas ingrained better than before at times. Respectful and ethical help ensure students are socially aware of the situation their in. Being ignorant, especially regarding political issues is very easily. Students often feel they know everything about a particular candidate or situation and they need to realize that they may not, and other students may have differing views. Also seeing the bigger picture, and understanding why passing a bill may serve the individual, however it will negatively affect a greater majority of the country. Seeing that your own desires are less important sometimes, and putting others ahead of yourself is for the better. (Beal and Bolick, 2013, p. 26)

Supersizing is continually happening in the education world, and conquering itself each day adding more options for educators to use. It is truly beneficial to the school system, students are now able to learn in different ways and be interactive with technology. We have seen how it connects us to other parts of the world, so why not connect us to our students through technology?

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References

Beal, C. & Bolick, C.M. (2013). *Teaching social studies in middle and secondary schools*. (6th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education, Inc.