

The POINT!

E-Letter for Western Pennsylvania Social Studies Educators
Vol. 13 No. 4

April 2020



Covid-19 - Corona Virus

This issue of The Point is an attempt to provide information about on-line teaching and learning. There are many pitfalls in attempts to offer distance learning including lack of on-line access by some students, especially in rural areas. Some innovative ways to meet these challenges have been reported, including adding wi-fi to school buses and parking them in central areas of neighborhoods where students can congregate at a safe distances and connect to the internet.

This is a great leap into the unknown and a challenge which most did not foresee. Hopefully, some of the items collected here will be useful to those who are struggling to reorganize their way of reaching students.

The 1918 “Spanish Flu”

The origin of the 1918 Pandemic Flu is often disputed. It definitely did not begin in Spain but got its name because the first published account of it was in an April 1918 newspaper published in Spain. During World War I, Spain was neutral and newspapers could publish without censorship. Both the Allies and the Central Powers censored the news to keep from destroying morale. In late 1917, military pathologists reported the onset of a new disease with high mortality that they later recognized as the flu. In March of 1918, soldiers in Fort Riley, Kansas were infected. The overcrowded camp and hospital was an ideal site for the spreading of a respiratory virus. This was the time when troops were shipping out to Europe and many infected doughboys boarded troop ships and took the flu to Europe.

The Armistice celebration in November 1918 brought jubilant crowds together passing the virus on. The pandemic continued into 1920 with 50 million people dying. Pittsburgh had 4500 deaths. According to Pittsburgh Health Department statistics from 1919, nearly 65 percent of the cases and 57 percent of the deaths came from people 15 to 40 years old.

Soldiers & Sailors Memorial Hall & Museum houses a vast collection of primary and secondary documents and military artifacts. It is their mission to promote the use of these educational items and create an understanding for all groups who visit the museum. They provide a rich learning experience for all people by exploring the deeds and sacrifices of ordinary citizens during extraordinary circumstances.

S&S is pleased to announce that we have once again received funding to support our **Bus Scholarship Program**.

Don't forget contact S&S about VIP Tours and Footlocker program.

For more information visit our web site:

<https://soldiersandsailorshall.org>



Teachers Collaborating Across Borders (TCAB): Online Program for US and Middle East/North African Teachers

We all need something to look forward to, sooooo here's an opportunity to participate during the 2020-2021 academic year in an online program that will bring together US and Middle Eastern K-12 teachers. We will meet both asynchronously and synchronously through Zoom every other week from September through November. Participants will also plan a classroom project of their choice (working with people from at least one other country), which they will implement in spring 2021. For A LOT more information and application materials, go to: https://cmes.arizona.edu/outreach/TCAB_program



CWB Coronavirus Update

Classrooms Without Borders is closely monitoring the news and is regularly consulting with our contacts on the ground in Europe and Israel. Last week, we postponed our Israel Educational Leadership Seminar that was supposed to depart on Sunday, March 15. Our Children's Village Service Learning Seminar was rescheduled to March 2021.

At this time, all of our other seminars are still scheduled as planned. This includes our Discovering Italy seminar in June, our Poland Personally seminar in the end of June and into July, and our Germany Close Up seminar in July. We will continue to update you if this changes due to the situation on the ground, and we expect to have another update by the beginning of April.



We open our mouths and out flow words whose ancestries we do not even know. We are walking lexicons. In a single sentence of idle chatter we preserve Latin, Anglo-Saxon, Norse: we carry a museum inside our heads, each day we commemorate peoples of whom we have never heard. -Penelope Lively, writer (b. 17 Mar 1933)

The Point

For
Western Pennsylvania
Social Studies Educators

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The Point is the
e-newsletter
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WPCSS was a non-profit 501c
organization dedicated to promoting
the teaching and learning of social
studies in Western Pennsylvania

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Schools plan for transition to remote learning

In this interview, several education leaders share how they have been planning for the rapid transition to remote learning in response to the coronavirus outbreak. Reshan Richards, director of studies at New Canaan Country School in Connecticut, shares that while focusing on technology infrastructure and planning, his school also is prioritizing students' mental well-being. **Full Story:** [EdSurge](#) (3/17)

Teacher shares ideas for learning at home

John Thomas, an elementary-school teacher, shares his approach to the home learning environment, such as sending encouraging emails and videos to students and parents. Thomas urges teachers to consider the varying levels of internet service and device access of families, while trying to retain classroom routines as much as possible. **Full Story:** [Edutopia](#) (3/17)

Lack of access to computers, broadband hinders online teaching

The Philadelphia School District will not offer remote instruction during the coronavirus shutdown, the superintendent announced Wednesday, [citing equity concerns in a city where many students lack computers or high-speed internet at home.](#)

Smithsonian offers Guide for On-line Learning

A [Distance Learning Resources Guide](#) to consolidate resources from across the Smithsonian is available over the coming days and weeks. New relevant teaching and enrichment resources will be added to it, including high tech, low tech, and technology-free activities. The Guide currently aligns Smithsonian resources to the Washington, D.C., K–8 curriculum and provides recommendations for families as well as self-directed learning by tweens and teens. In the days ahead it will share recommended resources for nationwide educational needs.

For an introduction to using the Learning Lab, [download the new Getting Started Guide here.](#)

The Smithsonian Education team is [available to support your discovery and use of these materials](#) now and into the future through training, office hours, and models of best practice. We are expanding opportunities for you to connect directly to us for realtime guidance, discussion, and support, including adding additional dates to [our weekly dig](#)

If you have a specific question or need, we are standing by to help you. [Email us at learning@si.edu](#) or [Tweet us using the #SmithsonianEdu tag](#), and we will connect you directly to the most appropriate educator.

The appetites will rule if the mind is vacant. Mary Wollstonecraft, writer, philosopher, women's rights advocate

Fabric of History: A New Podcast From BRI

The Bill of Rights Institute's new podcast series weaves together U.S. History, Founding Principles, and what all of this means to us today. Join us as we pull back the curtains of the past to see what's inside. Learn more [HERE](#)



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Why one La. district is canceling remote learning

A Louisiana school district has abandoned plans to hold online lessons during the prolonged school closures after a survey revealed wide gaps in access to technology among students. Officials say the decision to suspend distance learning will help avoid widening achievement gaps for students without access to the devices and the internet service. **Full Story:** The Advocate (Baton Rouge, La.) (3/18)



TAH offers webinar on 1918 Flu Pandemic

TAH will provide a special week-day webinar on a timely topic for teachers of history and government: the 1918 Flu Pandemic. Beginning during the last months of World War 1, a new strain of the H1N1 virus infected over 500 million people worldwide and led to at least 50 million deaths. It spread as far as remote Pacific Islands and even the Arctic, leaving deep scars on societies and individuals. *Teaching American History* feels that learning about this pandemic of a century ago may give us a clearer perspective on today's COVID-19 crisis.



You can find those resources on the [ASCD Inservice](#) blog and in the special issue of [ASCD Express](#).

Pa. teachers share approaches to online learning

Three teachers in Pennsylvania are working in various ways to implement distance learning as schools are closed due to the coronavirus outbreak. Fonda Akins, a high-school special education teacher is using Google Classroom, while elementary-school teacher Alice Hollingshed uses ClassDojo to upload materials for subjects including math. **Full Story:** WHYY-TV/WHYY-FM (Philadelphia) (3/17)



Constitution Center offers interactive courses

1 p.m. courses on Wednesday, Thursday, and Fridays will be available at constitutioncenter.org/live.

Starting on Monday, March 23, we are launching a free eight-week series of daily live interactive courses on the Constitution for middle school, high school, and college students. I will teach the courses, along with my NCC colleagues Kerry Sautner, our dynamic chief learning officer, and Tom Donnelly and Nicholas Mosvick, senior fellows in constitutional studies.



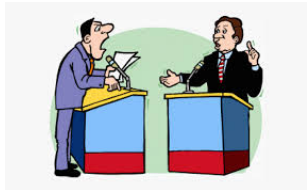
Some schools need training, more for e-learning



The decision to close schools and transition to online learning amid the coronavirus outbreak is raising the issue of inequality in schools. Some schools and educators, for example, lack experience, training and infrastructure to deliver online lessons, and some organizations are stepping up to help shore up those efforts, including the Global Online Academy, which is offering free resources. **Full Story:** [The Hechinger Report](#) (3/11)

Educators share challenges of teaching about politics

The current political climate gives teachers plenty of real-world topics to cover in civics and government classes but the uncertainty adds challenges, they say. In this article, educators share how they explore topics, use Socratic Seminars and encourage students to think for themselves. **Full Story:** [The Columbian \(Vancouver, Wash.\)](#) (tiered subscription model) (3/1)



Becoming U.S.: The Immigrant Experience through Primary Sources

A product receiving funding from the National Endowment for the Humanities, *Becoming U.S.: Teaching Historic Immigration in Current Times* is a project receiving funding from the National Historical Publications and Records Commission.



Kiski Pa. students depict history with murals

Kiski Area high school's walls are home to a student-led mural project called "A Picture is Worth a Thousand Words." Students explore historical events -- such as the civil rights movement or George Washington crossing the Delaware -- to inspire their artistic representations that also include smart technology like QR codes to offer more information about the subject. [Valley News Dispatch \(Tarentum, Pa.\)](#) (1/28)



Coronavirus flattens digital learning curve

The coronavirus outbreak has upended the traditional calendar for colleges and universities, with many adopting remote learning until the threat subsides. Susan Grajek, vice president for communities and research at Educause, says the rapid transition has flattened the learning curve for some faculty who otherwise may have been uncomfortable or unprepared to teach online. **Full Story:** [EdScoop](#) (3/24)



Ill. teachers record themselves reading aloud

Teachers at a Shorewood, Ill., elementary school are recording themselves reading children's books to help promote reading and connect with students while schools are closed during the coronavirus pandemic. A principal in a Joliet, Ill., school has been doing weekly read-alouds for a year that have been posted on Twitter, but more educators are recording videos that may be available on other platforms. **Full Story:** [Morris Herald-News \(Ill.\)](#) (3/20)



There's always something to occupy the inquiring mind. Margaret Atwood, writer

Bill of Rights Institute Essay Contest

At the Bill of Rights Institute, we love to ask challenging questions. We also love to reward students who rise to the challenge by tackling some of the most compelling questions of our time. For this year's [We the Students Essay Contest](#), we are challenging students to tell us what civil discourse means to them. The students who provide the most thoughtful, meaningful responses to this question will receive scholarship awards of up to \$7,500. A total of fourteen students will receive scholarship prizes totaling \$19,000.

For this essay, we are asking students to not only share their comprehension of what civil discourse is meant to be but also to relate what it looks like when it works – and when it does not – and why. Perhaps they will choose to include mention of a time when they, themselves, were part of an exchange intended to understand something – how did they go about it? We encourage them to bring emotion, creativity, specific examples (including current events), and well-researched facts into what they write.

Our mailing address is:

1310 North Courthouse Road, Suite 620, Arlington, Virginia 22201

Advice for teachers during an uncertain time

A lot is being asked of teachers and parents as schools transition to remote learning and the country responds to the coronavirus pandemic, says Christine Elgersma, a senior editor of social media and learning resources at nonprofit Common Sense Media. In this interview, she offers advice for teachers, such as taking breaks and recognizing that everything will not be perfect. **Full Story:** EdSurge (3/24)

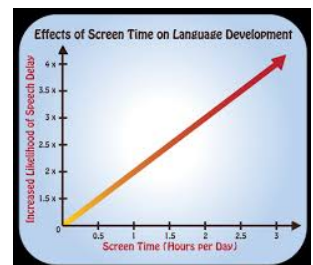
Study: Screen time could affect language skills

Widespread and prolonged school closures during the coronavirus pandemic have more students worldwide learning at home, but a paper in the journal JAMA Pediatrics shows increasing screen time could harm children's language development. Sheri Madigan, lead researcher from the University of Calgary in Canada, says school leaders and educators can help parents develop plans to keep screen time in check. **Full Story:** Education Week (tiered subscription model) (3/23)

Educator Resources for Remote Learning

Elementary educators looking for neat things to share with their students during this time of disruption under the virus might delight in meeting Maggie Rendell, the irrepressible family pet of the former Governor and Pennsylvania First Lady. Follow Maggie into a delightful experience of elementary civics. These adventures can be found at:

<https://www.rendellcenter.org/maggies-civics-corner/>



Supporting
Students During
COVID-19

*Out, Out, damed spot! -Lady Macbeth washes her hands,
Shakespeare, Act 5, Scene 1, MacBeth.*

Maggie's Civics Corner - The Rendell Center for Civics and Civic Engagement

www.rendellcenter.org



Maggie's Civics Corner provides teachers and parents with fun and engaging free civics lessons that educate and promote problem-solving skills. [More...](#)

Civics on line treasure hunt

<https://www.rendellcenter.org/teachers-tools-2/>

The Rendell Center has developed classroom lessons and activities that tie in with *March* Books One through Three. These downloadable lessons are designed to educate about civil rights and lead to engaged discussion through their focused activities.



Free Resources from Vietnam War Commemoration

In preparation for National Vietnam War Veterans Day, the Vietnam War Commemoration has prepared free education materials for use in classrooms, libraries, and museums. [Explore their resources.](#)



SIS Offers Free Lesson Plans

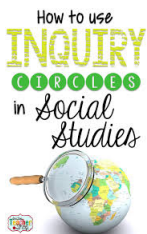
The Census Bureau has designed classroom activities and lesson plans to help students understand the census. [Learn more.](#)



Teachers identify top social studies lessons

A group of educators share their best social studies lessons in this blog post, including Utah's Carina Whiteside, who shares a 3-day lesson on the contrast of slavery and the American principle of equality. Teacher Denise Fawcett Facey describes a lesson in which students learn about prejudice while Michigan teacher Mark Honeyman shares a lesson on human trafficking.

[Education Week Teacher \(tiered subscription model\)](#) (11/24)



State legislatures try to boost civics education

More than 30 states considered some 80 pieces of legislation aimed at improving civics education during the 2018-19 legislative session, according to Ted McConnell, the executive director of the Campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools. CivXNow, a coalition of organizations spearheading some efforts, may issue a guide of model civics legislation for other states. [Education Week \(tiered subscription model\)](#) (6/26)



How to build critical inquiry in history lessons

History instruction should shift away from textbook-guided lessons to instead focus on critical inquiry about history, asserts Sam Wineburg of Stanford University. Will Colglazier, a US history teacher in the San Mateo Union High School District, says this approach should include a focus on teaching digital literacy skills. [KQED-TV/FM \(San Francisco\)](#) (3/24) [Should teachers avoid living history lessons?](#)



*A promise made is a debt unpaid. Robert W. Service, poet,
writer*