THE HARDWARE CHOICE
Which Way Do You Go?

7 DISTRICTS SHARE LESSONS LEARNED FROM MAKING DEVICE DECISIONS FOR THEIR 1-TO-1 PROGRAMS. p.28

IN THIS ISSUE

10 | CLOSING THE GAP
What do teachers need to use data to teach?

19 | FUNDING SURVIVAL TOOLKIT
Evaluating principals and superintendents.

23 | CURRICULUM UPDATE
Primary sources bring history to life.

28 | THE HARDWARE CHOICE
Finding the right device for 1-to-1.

37 | EXPERT PERSPECTIVE
Technology can unlock conceptual learning.

43 | ONLINE LEARNING
Distance AP courses open student options.

DEPARTMENTS

2 | OUR SPACE
Can Cell Phones in Classrooms?

3 | YOU TOLD US
Managing Tablets in Schools

5 | HERE & NOW
6 Great Storytelling Apps

9 | PROFILE
Bryan Fanson, Principal, Medina, OH

51 | PRODUCT ROUNDUP

52 | INDEX
History, in Its Prime

A new crop of digital tools featuring primary sources and immersive lessons are giving students an active role in bringing history—or at least social studies class—to life.

Raise your hand if your memories of social studies class include any of the following: a teacher lecturing at the front of the room while the class sits in rows of desks; getting all your information from one big, heavy textbook; memorizing events and dates, regurgitating them on a test, and promptly forgetting them; a desperate attempt to stay awake.

Now picture a class where students put not just Christopher Columbus, but his men and even King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella on mock trial for the mistreatment and murder of Taíno Indians. Where students read an essay by Andrew Carnegie on wealth and charity, then use that as a jumping-off point into activities that illustrate different incomes and the cost of living. And where students learn as often from songs, diary entries, speeches, and posters as they do from textbooks.

Honest, this is not your mother’s social studies.

Digital social studies curricula come in many forms, but they share common goals: to make social studies relevant to students and to make history lessons more interactive than the traditional model. Primary sources — those aforementioned articles, songs, diaries, and speeches — are a major means of achieving these goals.

Two recent graduates of Cleveland High School in Portland, OR, used primary source materials in their 11th grade history classes. Mabel Vautravers says her class looked at different documents not just for the information they meant to convey, but also for the biases and beliefs that informed that information.

“We analyzed whether they were reliable, whether they were firsthand accounts or secondhand accounts, who wrote these records down, and for what purpose?” Vautravers says. “The benefit was having to deeply, critically think about the information you were receiving.”

Claire Chin found that hearing individual voices brought her and her fellow students closer to the events they studied. “Non-academic sources like diary entries or folk songs showed us outside perspectives on events that gave us insight into how the historical events impacted normal people,” Chin says, adding, “These perspectives give students a real connection to the past that they just don’t get in a textbook.”
In more traditional social studies classes, teachers supplement the text with occasional external sources like handouts, videos, and visits from local veterans. Digital courses, many of which are online, use lessons as an embarkation point into the vast sea of available material on the web. This way, students become the researchers, the historians, sleuthing for answers instead of simply receiving them. A look at four digital social studies offerings shows how it’s done.

**Whispering History**

For Cheryl Davis, technology specialist for the Acalanes Union High School District in Lafayette, CA, technology and social studies belong together. Davis started out as a social studies teacher, and this, along with her experience as a technologist, has led to stints as a teaching mentor for the Library of Congress and as a senior teaching fellow for C-SPAN.

Davis and two colleagues created “History Whispering,” an app-based presentation available on iTunes designed for teachers who are starting to incorporate iPads into the history classroom. Davis provides history lessons and activities that teachers can administer to students via the iPads, as well as a list of 36 apps, most of them free, that are available through the iTunes store.

The title, a play on the idea of horse or dog whispering, conjured for Davis the notion of communicating with history in a deep and meaningful way. “We want our students to learn by communicating with history’s primary sources and with historians,” she says, “not just by sitting and listening to history lectures.”

A significant portion of Davis’ work is based on primary sources through the various apps that she and her colleagues have collected, including the Congressional Record app, which provides the daily edition as well as archives of congressional debates.

“Fish need an ideal environment to grow. Turns out, so do students.”

*The Auburn Certification for Aquaculture Professionals (CAP) program brings a world-class learning experience to students in developing areas across the globe—making a powerful difference in their lives, the economies of their areas and the exploding aquaculture industry. Canvas by Instructure helps make it possible. Across languages and distance, Canvas provides the modern learning platform that brings together elements like the cloud, mobile, open integrations and more to create an environment where learning never stops growing.*

Troy Hahn, *IT Director*  
Department of Fisheries and Allied Aquacultures, Auburn University

See how Canvas can help you transform learning and find out more about Troy’s story at [instructure.com/reach](http://instructure.com/reach) or by calling 866.494.1971.
proceedings, and activities: the Life app, an archive of millions of Life magazine photographs; and the iTunes U app, which provides access to more than 500,000 lectures, courses, and books and the collections of schools and institutions from UC Berkeley and Yale to the Museum of Modern Art. Many of the other apps provide tools that enable students to complete the course activities, which include making maps, presentations, films, and audio recordings.

History Whispering offers three roles that students can play, each with related activities:
- Collectors & Curators do primary research on their families, neighborhoods, and towns.
- Citizen Sleuths use primary and secondary sources to analyze and solve local, national, and international challenges related to history and government.
- Practitioners Extraordinaire use a variety of tools and skill sets, including writing, presentation tools, speaking, and multimedia, to "history whisper"—or tell historical stories that have personally resonated with students, but always supported by data sets and facts.

"In the area of history, I see technology allowing students to be collectors and curators of historical artifacts," Davis says, adding, "when you do something yourself, that's the learning that sticks with you."

Social Study Guides
The often tongue-in-cheek learning site Stoopid may be best known for its witty collection of study guides on subjects ranging from Shakespeare to calculus, but the site's history section also provides a wealth of primary sources from around the web. Each of the site's history lessons, for example, features a "Best of the Web" tab, which links to relevant websites, books, movies, music, images, and historical documents.

If students are studying the
interchange of plants, animals, and diseases between the Old World and the Americas after Columbus’ arrival known as the Columbian Exchange, the Best of the Web tab can point them to books and articles by specialists in the field, such as Alfred Crosby, who coined the term. They can also find a historical record of the journeys of René-Robert Cavalier, Sieur de La Salle (an explorer whose travels are described by his faithful lieutenant, his early biographer, and his brother, among others) as well as links to music composed during the times and images — smallpox anyone? — that relate to the lesson.

A separate teacher’s guide describes activities and assignments that enable students to take advantage of the resources beyond the site itself. To help link the events to students’ lives, the site also produces “Shmoopsterpiece Theatre” — humorous fast-paced videos of key historical events on topics like the Louisiana Purchase and the Salem witch trials.

Agents of History
Bert Bower, CEO and founder of TCI, has a goal to take down what he calls “stand and deliver” teaching. A veteran social studies teacher with a Ph.D. from Stanford, Bowers believes that technology is going to “allow social studies teachers to teach in amazingly engaging ways, not because it’s more complex, but because it brings multimedia into the classroom.”

TCI’s online lesson plan on fascism provides one example of how Bower hopes to get students out of their seats and interacting with primary historical documents through the use of multimedia. For this lesson, teachers print out and hang up a “gallery” of historical fascist propaganda posters. Recordings of actual fascist speeches play in the background, while students pose as American journalists and review and assess the posters.

As the lesson proceeds, students acquire secret information that they must keep from the government leader (played by their teacher) who has been tasked with cracking down on any subversive or antigovernment sentiments at the exhibit. In this way, the classroom dynamics demonstrate the effects of fascism on a broader populace; students get a taste of the restrictions and dangers experienced by citizens of the time by interacting with historical resources.

In another lesson, students use a wireless mouse to point out aspects of historical photos, posters, and works of art that they find interesting as a means of generating discussion. This way, students learn how to interpret sources that they might not have considered educational and find the lessons in those sources.

Lessons also include a blend of digital and multimedia instruction with activities that get students up and moving around the classroom. When students study the American Revolution, for example, they engage in a physical tug of war; in another lesson, students must hold a press conference in the character of a historical figure. The TCI curriculum provides students with a text, a digital interactive notebook where they draw and write, reading challenges, and other tools, such as a Spanish translation and text for English learners. Teachers’ materials include presentations, assessments, differentiated instruction for different types of students, and activities that align with the Common Core and state standards.
CURRICULUM UPDATE

Finding Support
Discovery Education models its approach to social studies on the inquiry-based approach used in its science curricula. Kelli Campbell, senior vice president, says that Discovery’s web-based lesson plans encourage students to form a claim, create an argument to defend that claim, and then find the evidence to support it. From the get-go, students are sent in search of primary sources that inform their initial conclusions and can then be used to support those arguments.

In a lesson called “Discover England and France,” students go online to chart significant locations around London and Paris like the Globe Theatre and the Eiffel Tower, explore Paris’ sewer systems, and to research foods of the regions. Activities lead students to locate an image of the Magna Carta online and then participate in a discussion about the forms of government in the two countries. The recommended assessment rubric gives the highest scores to work that includes a variety of primary and secondary sources.

The Discovery model provides information for different types of learners, and videos are one integral aspect of the curriculum. All lessons include videos of related locations and events, such as a video of the Galápagos Islands that profiles a hybrid lizard, which embodies evolutionary principles that support the lesson. Students see the lizard in its environment, while an on-the-spot researcher describes its import. Similarly, students can produce work in a variety of different media: they can write papers, create short films, or even produce podcasts.

“Our philosophy, first and foremost, is that social studies are something that students should be doing,” Campbell says.

Michelle Fredette is a freelance writer who splits her time between Seattle and Portland, OR.