

Philosophy of Teaching Social Studies

Philosophy of Teaching Social Studies

The way in which social studies is presented to a child, can make, or break them as a future citizen of society. Due to social studies being critical in a person's ability to function in society, students must be taught this throughout their time in the K-12 atmosphere. Educators must teach social studies often and in-depth. There are five essential components of social studies: geography; history; culture and society; civics and government; and economics.

According to Vygotsky, "social activity is the generator of thought." The purpose of social studies is to prepare children for "office of citizen" and to integrate knowledge skills, and attitudes within and across disciplines. I believe that the teacher of social studies cannot make decisions without the knowledge of children, knowledge of the community where the children live, knowledge of the social studies content, and knowledge of state and local standards. I also believe that social studies cannot be taught through the simple, outdated use of a textbook. Teachers should incorporate these topics across all areas of the curriculum.

There are plenty of different ways that geography and history can be taught with the guidance of the textbook, but not allowing that to be the central focus of the children's education. Geography can be integrated into math by allowing students to calculate distances. It can also be taught in conjunction with the reading curriculum by exploring the different locations that are discussed in literature. History could be easily integrated into reading and writing lessons by having students write RAFTs based upon certain historical periods. Students can also be taught history through the use of timelines which would allow math to be integrated into the lesson.

Culture and society should be introduced and discussed in the classroom as frequently as possible, in a variety of different ways. Students will be able to respect the different cultures in

Philosophy of Teaching Social Studies

the world around them when they have taught to value others for their differences, not just based on their similarities. Teachers can introduce culture to their students through reading to allow for children to fully immerse themselves in a story that can extend beyond the classroom setting.

Civics and government are easily incorporated in the classroom by maintaining an environment where students are given choices and roles of importance. Students should be given opportunities to develop their own rules and consequences; in doing so, they will begin to take ownership of what they do as well as the space they are learning in. This will allow for discussions regarding equality, freedom of opinion and beliefs, and various types of government to occur.

Economics can be taught to students through math lessons. The students should be given adequate opportunities to explore the various types of currencies and economies around the world. The students should also be given time to explore how events that happen every day could impact economics in either a positive or negative manner.

I believe that social studies is the basis of growth as a society. Without the education of social studies, we raise children that are less accepting of others. That is what needs to occur in society, acceptance. There is so much hate that happens every day, teachers have a lasting effect on their students and how they learn to accept differences throughout their lives.