

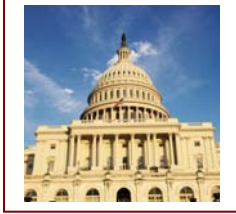
EFFECTIVE TEACHING PRACTICES IN U.S. HISTORY

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SUMMARY

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Why a U.S. History Study?

In 2006-07, 74.2% of WCPSS U.S. History students scored proficient on the North Carolina EOC exam. This was an improvement from the 69.6% proficiency rate of 2005-06. Yet the achievement gap between White students and Black/African American students was 36 percentage points (85.5%, compared to 49.3%). Of the 18 high schools in the study, three had proficiency rates below the state average of 56.8% in 2005-06.

Project Goals

- Collect WCPSS specific data that will help teachers, schools, and district leadership understand current U.S. History practices.
- Identify and share best teaching strategies.
- Contribute to a series of studies that identify targets for overall school improvement.

Methods & Analysis

Twenty-nine teachers taught U.S. History in 2001-02, 2002-03, and 2005-06 and were teaching in 2006-07. For these 29 teachers, the average student residual was calculated for 2005-06, for combined 2001-02 and 2002-03, and for all three years. The teachers were ranked on teacher effectiveness from highest to lowest using the 2005-06 averages. The comparison of these rankings to the earlier and combined averages confirmed the consistency of the new test rankings with the previous test rankings. There were no tests in 2003-04 and 2004-05. Teachers with the 10 highest and 10 lowest 2005-06 residual averages became the ultimate focus of this study. The full report on this study includes a detailed explanation of residuals. Results of teacher surveys, observations, student scores, and focus-group interviews of these 10 teachers were compared.

Results

Top teachers shared a love for studying history and the desire to foster both knowledge and understanding of history in their students, and also an appreciation of history. They used instructional strategies that taught their students how to become lifelong historians. These instructional practices were divided into four areas of comparison: intellectual demand, intellectual enrichment, time management, and student-centered versus teacher-centered classrooms

Instructional Practices – Intellectual Demand

Ten out of 10 top teachers expected all students to participate as they learned to read, take and organize notes, make connections, analyze, and respond to higher-order thinking skill questions. The acquisition of facts happened within a sense-making context. Teachers questioned individual students.

Instructional Practices – Intellectual Enrichment

Ten out of 10 top teachers had basic content knowledge and showed evidence of continued learning as professionals. They infused supplementary content information into the classroom and developed many of their own materials rather than relying solely on publisher-supplied materials. They had efficient focused planning times with colleagues.

Instructional Practices – Time Management

Nine out of 10 top teachers taught bell-to-bell, used an invigorated delivery rate, and used an effective lecture/discussion method.

Instructional Practices – Student-Centered Classrooms

Ten out of 10 top teachers connected the content to current events and student's lives, taught students to be historians, and built positive relationships with students.

Teachers' Possible Next Steps

- Study the standard course of study and EOC testing program.
- Plan with other teachers.
- Understand and implement Marzano strategies.
- Use and/or develop a course plan for U.S. History.
- Study American history to deepen content knowledge and enrich classroom instruction.
- Teach reading and note taking.
- Hold high, rigorous expectations for **all** students.

School-based Leadership's Possible Next Steps

- Develop a school plan that aligns to the standard course of study, emphasizing rigor and relevance.
- Support and expect meaningful common planning for teachers.
- Share results data with teachers including effectiveness rosters and indices.
- Develop a scheduling plan that maintains stability in American history.
- Support a school culture that promotes high, rigorous expectations for all students.

District-based Leadership's Possible Next Steps

- Make observations of effective schools and teachers that can be shared district wide.
- Provide workshops on implementing Marzano strategies.
- Support school-wide improvement efforts based on top school models.
- Support teacher improvement efforts.
- Provide data to teachers and schools on their effectiveness.

Full report: http://www.wcpss.net/evaluation-research/reports/2008/0705effective_us_history.pdf



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