

To the Riley Institute,

First of all, I want to say thank you for the opportunity to participate in the Teachers of Government program. I learned a lot not only from the various exhibits and presenters, but also from fellow teachers in the program. This program was unique in that the learning was hands-on, and real-world based rather than sitting in a classroom learning to mimic a professional. I was delighted to share what I learned with my colleagues as well as my students in the upcoming year.

I had to opportunity to share with my colleagues during one of our professional development days. I created a short Google Slides presentation that I shared with them so they can access everything after the fact. The titles of each of the slides are linked to the resources. First, I spent a few minutes explaining the nuts and bolts of the program - what the Riley Institute is, where we traveled, who we met, etc. Then I shared some of my favorites resources from the trip. Most important to selecting resources to share were two things - 1) even though it was a "government" trip, the resources can be used for all social studies content areas, and 2) each resource had a teacher account that could be accessed for free.

The Newseum resources were particularly great for social studies subjects because they can be used to teach perspective and multiple points of view. From "Today's Front Pages" to the Video Lessons on "Bias," which can explicitly teach point of view to the historical focused lessons on the Berlin Wall or Women's Suffrage, each lesson uses multiple perspectives to present information. In a world where students tend to see one side of a story, getting them to understand varying points of view is difficult. The Newseum resources can be an asset in the classroom.

I chose to highlight the the Archives' resources because of the ease of workflow with their site and resources. Most of the US History teachers already use DocsTeach from the Archives, but most did not know that they could assign and collect assignments within the Archives. With the influx of technological resources, figuring out how to assign and collect student work digitally is sometimes a hassle. I walked teachers through this feature and we all thought it was really easy. This feature can be used for Archives' created activities as well as teacher created activities.

The Library of Congress resources were great for my colleagues for a number of reasons. First of all, they were most diverse. From map sets for geography, to regionally divided resources for world history and geography, there were resources beyond the obvious government and US history applications. I pointed these examples out but also showed them one of my favorite resources, the updated THOMAS system. Congress.gov is a resource that the government teachers and I will use throughout the year. The videos that explain the legislative process are easy to follow and useful. Even better, the ability to get updates on pending or historical legislation by putting in search terms will make student research possible and open up a number of project possibilities.

Finally, I saved the best resource for last - C-SPAN Classroom. This resource is great for economics (rare!) as well as the usual government and US history courses. The annotated Constitution makes an old document new again. In fact, during the presentation, the college prep government teachers really liked this resources as a way to bring the Constitution to lower level classes because it is very applicable and based on real life situations. Otherwise, I showed teachers the Bellringers, lesson plans, and student project assignments - great because they are searchable. We really liked the organization of the site. Honestly, I think this is the resources most teachers will use because starting small with Bellringers is an easy way to bring in new resources.

It was from C-SPAN Classroom that I found the first lesson I could modify and use in my classroom. The *Tracing the Legislative Process* lesson plan helped me rethink two areas that my students struggle with in AP government. According to the AP Government curriculum,

students need to understand not only the process of how a bill becomes a law in detail but also specific public policy formation and examples. In the past, I had students diagram the process during the Institutions unit, and then at a later time had students learn various important pieces of legislation during the Policy unit. However, the C-SPAN Classroom lesson gave me the idea to put these pieces together. By having students look at the process and the specific examples together, I hope student's understanding of the bill to law process is deeper and more complex because they are learning it by example.

While I liked the lesson as it was, I changed it to better fit my classroom. Firstly, I added *Access to Prior Knowledge* at the beginning. I felt the lesson did not provide enough support for students to be introduced to the legislative process. Adding this information also makes the lesson useable for multiple levels of students. Therefore, I added resources I already use (*I'm Just a Bill*) and resources I found on the trip (C-SPAN bellringer and Congress.gov Legislative Process videos). In addition, I changed the list of legislation used to fit what is needed in the AP Government curriculum. This list came from colleagues and experience. I also updated the resources to help with legislation research from Congress.gov. The lesson originally led students to THOMAS which is outdated. Finally, I plan on lessening the video and discussion requirements from the videos students pull from C-SPAN. I want my students to use the C-SPAN video library but I do not think they need a video per slide and multiple discussion questions. I will ask my students to use a video where it applies (2-3 total) so that the focus is on the legislation and process and not the videos. I do not want students to get lost in the details. However, when I wrote the lesson up, I left the requirements flexible (and the assessment too) because each teacher can best judge what his/her students need.

The activities, resources, and experiences I've touched on above are only the surface of what I gained from the Teachers of Government program. Just knowing these resources are out there as I plan throughout the year not only help make my job easier, but they also make me better at my job. I look forward to the year and years ahead and am thankful to the Riley Institute for the opportunity.

Thank you,

Ali Hendrick