



South Georgia
History Project

The Wiregrass Telegraph

Promoting Educational Excellence in U. S. History!

**Treeless
Edition**
Mar 22, 2004

Highly Qualified Teachers

You most likely know by now that the Feds have revised their definition of "highly qualified teacher", especially for rural schools. The new rules (as of MAR 15th) are available from your administrators or from us, if you can't find them anywhere else. What's important to participants in this program is the way that teachers are evaluated for that all-important category. Participation in SGHP - along with classroom experience and content area knowledge - is an important part of the evaluation of whether or not you are classified as "highly qualified". Ordinarily this might have a minimal impact, but in these days of budget cutbacks if you are being compared to other teachers for layoff, SGHP is obvious evidence of ongoing professional development. If you find yourself in this position and need a detailed explanation of what SGHP is doing for you, don't hesitate to let us know.

Georgia Performance Standards

For the past month, the folks at GA DOE have been out on the road explaining the new Performance Standards (GPS) to system level administrators. By now what they said may have percolated down to you.....or it may not have. If it has, the full impact may not have been communicated to you. A GPS is NOT a QCC, or even a new QCC. There may be some similarity in the subject matter but a GPS is HOW YOU TEACH. A GPS requires action on the part of the student. In your lesson plans, students must demonstrate by some action that they comprehend what you're teaching.

"Understanding, comprehending, absorbing, etc." are not student actions and therefore have no place in a GPS lesson plan. So a GPS establishes what action, and what conditions the student does to demonstrate knowledge of the content area. In other words, it's what good teachers have always been doing. It also dovetails very nicely into the Learning Focused Schools model.

Find the online resources for GPSs at <http://www.georgiastandards.org>, a website created especially for teachers during this transition period.

Seems Easy - So What's the Rub?

If you've been requiring performance from your students all along, you're used to GPS standards. You know that a thorough grasp of the content area you're trying to teach is essential if you're going to formulate plans for student performance. You also know that a comprehensive breakdown of major tasks into subtasks is absolutely necessary in order for students to thoroughly understand a subject. So your planning takes the form of a sequential group of subtasks that lead the student through performance activities which will terminate in a culminating activity that wraps it all up. The rub is that if you don't understand the content area you're teaching, you won't know enough to break down a subject and formulate logical student activities.



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Teacher Training

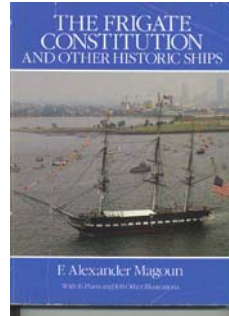
Several of the slides in the DOE presentation are addressed to teacher training teams in content area. That means you. At that point the presentation gets a bit fuzzy, but the time gates for implementation of GPSs aren't fuzzy at all. Although social studies teachers will still have to be mindful of the QCCs for next school year, you'll start using the new curriculum the following year. That's not a lot of time for you to prepare, especially since much of what US history will cover - 1877 to present - is an area very seldom taught in depth. For many teachers it will be like starting all over in a teaching career again. So being mindful of the new requirements and doing as much as possible toward GPSs for SY 2004-2005 would help you a great deal in the following 2 short years.

SGHP Activities Schedules

For the past few months you've been getting activities schedules on about a monthly basis via Email. There are 2 schedules - one is a 3 year forecast showing scheduled major activities, the other is for upcoming summer 2004 activities. They're both divided into cohorts corresponding to your RESA - roughly people east or west of I75. When you get a new schedule, throw the old one away because they're being continually revised.

Boston trip upcoming

The original CP RESA cohort will be traveling to Boston on 24-28 March to attend the annual OAH conference. We already have a



special tour of USS Constitution given by US Navy historians lined up and we'll take lots of pictures for you. If you have an interest in USS Constitution, all participants received a read-ahead study CD-ROM of about 110 pages

of detailed background information and pictures. We'll take lots of pictures while there and if USS Constitution is your thing the disk with pics and reference material will be available on request for teaching.

Atlanta trip upcoming

If you've been looking at your activities schedules, you'll also see the SE Regional OAH Conference is in Atlanta 8-11 July 2004. EVERYONE in SGHP is invited - we'll start working on details, trip plans, etc on 1 April and get that out to you ASAP.

SGHP Milestone

On the Ides of March, we reached a momentous decision in the life cycle of SGHP - our 38th member of 45 programmed signed up and we decided to shift our emphasis from recruiting to enhancing the program. That's not to say that we won't take more members, but we're not out looking. Our newest member is Natalie Cloud at Seminole HS. Like all of you, she's an experienced teacher who wants to become a better teacher through more personal knowledge. Welcome Natalie.