Best Practices

Rethinking History Education:

A Narrative Online Experiment

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Rethinking history education for teachers through a four year longitudinal online project is the focus of this paper. The project was initiated from a Teaching American History grant that supported course development and online offerings for inservice history teachers as part of the project. Themes addressed during the four years that dealing with the concept of rethinking history education include rethinking frontier, rethinking literature, renegade history, and alternative perspectives in history.

The courses were developed using moodle and took place over the last four summers, generally in a 4 – 5 week period during the summer. The instructor developed introductory and concluding modules, but specific topics / themes, projects, readings and resources were negotiated with the students. Projects required included online engagement, facilitating an online presentation, reflections on instructor and class presentations, a synthesis posting, and the development of an application for teaching history at the high school level. General findings thusfar suggest that the alternative focus of the content, the allowance for debate and controversy, course facilitation by students for most of each class, and the practical applications and resources shared all contributed to student efficacy, time online, and depth of engagement.