

Same Department, Different Styles

Headline: Social Studies teachers use unique teaching methods to help their students learn

A New Look at History

Subhead: Teacher takes history beyond the time period and into the real world

AP United States History teacher **Corby Lange** said he wanted his students to learn history through experiences and to demonstrate independent thinking.

“I think that we have to learn to think for ourselves,” Lange said. “In order to think for yourself, you have to be able to understand what happened and why it happened.”

He said his lessons were focused on learning about small pieces of the puzzle and then applying it to the bigger history concept he wanted his students to understand.

“I think what makes history such a great subject matter is because there are lessons...” Lange said. “There's so many things that you can take from history and apply it to your own life or your own business or your own job or your own family or your own role.”

He said one of the struggles with history was that many kids were taught just to regurgitate information rather than applying it. With this, Lange said he focused on making sure his students took what they learned beyond the time period.

In his class, there were no traditional tests. Instead students took videos, wrote essays or participated in socratic seminars to prove they learned the material. Students could also redo assignments and there was no late penalty. Junior **Lexi Jones**, who took AP United States History with Lange, said she liked this aspect.

“He's really trying to just improve us individually, like with what we've learned and how we show and demonstrate the knowledge of what we've learned,” Jones said.

The Psychology of Teaching

Subhead: Teacher crafts her class to promote an interest in psychology

AP Psychology and Applied Psychology teacher **Heidi Gipple** had a specific curriculum, however she said she focused on certain topics students would find more interesting.

“I think everybody wants to learn something,” Gipple said. “We all have something that piques our curiosity.”

Gipple said her psychology lessons varied from day-to-day as she took in different aspects: the topic she was teaching, as well as the classes themselves. She said she taught with lectures, projects, stations, online gaming tools and anything she thought would help her students learn most effectively. AP students could also choose between doing a project or taking a test every unit, she said.

Sophomore **Maggie Connolly**, who took Gipple's Applied Psychology class, said she liked the class as she was allowed to work at her own pace. One activity done in the class was students designing a prison. She said learning like this helped her learn more than any other class.

Gipple said the positive feedback her class received was one of her main motivations for teaching.

"I mean, the positivity, I feel like I get out of it is the reason I keep doing what I'm doing and continue to work so hard because I see the benefit of it through those positive interactions with students," Gipple said.

A New Impact

Subhead: New teacher finds inspiration in his teaching style from his high school experience

First year United States History and Career and Life Planning teacher **Dayton Valentine** said his own experiences as a high school student led him to teach his classroom in a less traditional way. He said multiple choice tests did not help him learn.

"I kind of realized that I enjoy being part of the process of helping young people," Valentine said. "Then it made me think back to the people that had the biggest impact on my life, my teachers and coaches, so I wanted to be able to do that for somebody else."

Valentine said he wanted his classroom to be an exciting environment where students wanted to learn history. He said it was important to understand history as it was beneficial outside of the classroom.

"History teaches us a ton of great lessons and about what has previously happened, why have these things happened, how can we make sure you know what worked well... then always constantly improving as a person and as a society is important," Valentine said.

To help his students understand history, Valentine said he tried various activities. His students made argumentative videos, did mock trials, elections and took short answer exams. Most recently, his students also had the option to take multiple choice tests as well.

One of his United States History students, **Josephine Johnson**, said his engaging lessons helped her learn history better.

“I think that they're really beneficial because not everyone learns their best through lectures, so it's kind of [helping] different people,” Johnson said.