

Teaching U.S. History During a Pandemic: A Conversation with Two High School Teachers

Full Transcript

On July 28, 2020, Bill of Rights Institute's president, David Bobb, spoke with Jessica Culver, a social studies teacher for 17 years at Ozark High School in rural Arkansas, and Christopher Evans who has taught social studies for 12 years at Basha High School in Chandler, Arizona in suburban Phoenix. Ozark serves around 400 students, and Basha has an enrollment of around 2600. Both teachers helped pilot BRI's new, free digital U.S. History textbook, [Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness](#).

David Bobb

Well, thanks so much to Jessica Culver and Chris Evans for joining me. My name is David Bob. I serve as president of the Bill of Rights Institute. We're delighted to have this opportunity to just talk about the year ahead, to learn more about the work of Jessica and Chris, who are two educators who have devoted their teaching careers to helping young people in subject areas related to history, economics, and civics instruction. Jessica and Chris, thanks so much for joining BRI today in our conversation.

Jessica Culver

Thanks.

Chris Evans

Thank you. Glad to be here.

David

What I'd like to do today is ask if you can be our guide, a guide for those who today are trying to understand, whether they're at a policy level, whether they're superintendents, building principals, or others who are in the teaching profession. How are you thinking about how you are grappling with questions of access? Equity? Content? All in this era of COVID. So we're going to tackle big stuff and just make it a conversation about ways in which we can really enlighten, hopefully illuminate, and learn from each other about ways that an

open education resource like *Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness*, BRI's newest product addition, can also play a role in these times when there are lots of challenges on the curriculum front. But I know there's so much more than the curriculum side. We want to get into that. But let's start with a little bit about each of you. If you don't mind, Jessica, perhaps you could just tell us about who you are, how long you've been teaching, where you teach and what subjects.

Jessica

OK, I teach at Ozark High School in Ozark, Arkansas, named so because we are in the Ozark Mountains and that is the Ozark Hillbilly behind me. I was just telling Christopher about it. I'm entering year 18 of teaching and I usually have taught civics most of those years. I teach other histories, too, always with economics, college world history, college U.S. history, but really civics has always been the big focus through most of my career.

David

When do your students take civics?

Jessica

Well, we're switching. It used to be ninth grade. They would take civics and economics, which is where teachers always taught it. I'm now at Ozark High School and they will be taking it in eleventh grade, which I think is a much better fit because they're really about to vote, so it matters to them much more deeply at this age. So I'm excited. We are now teaching it to the big kids and Arkansas does have a graduation requirement. Everyone in the state must pass the U.S. civics citizenship test for a high school diploma, which I think has been wonderful and put a lot more emphasis on US. history.

David

Well, let's return to that, because I think that's really interesting. You're in a rural part of the state, what is the size of your high school?

Jessica

Our town is a little under three thousand people. Our high school, grades 10 to 12, serves about 400 students. But we serve a giant swath of the Ozark area. Our buses run very far into the mountains. We are surrounded by very rural communities who come here for school.

David

OK, yeah, that's great. We we want to dig into that as well, and some of the unique needs that you've seen amongst students who are in your rural community and rural communities at large. I know there are some things that are of real concern as we as we think about what are schools doing now with the potential for reopening. Let me turn to you, Chris. You're in a high school that is not that much different in size than Jessica's town. Is that right?

Chris

That is correct, yeah. I'm in Chandler, Arizona which is one of the larger suburbs of the Phoenix metro area. There are a little over 250,000 people in Chandler. Our high school, Basha High School, has a student population of about 2600 students, and that includes an accelerated middle school on our campus that includes a little over 200 students. So somewhere between 2300 and 2400 in the 9 through 12 population.

David

How long have you been teaching at Basha High School and what subject areas are you mainly focused on?

Chris

This is the only school I've taught at. This will be my 13th year that Basha. We go back to school tomorrow, so looking forward to what this year brings, and all the excitement that will go with it. I have taught pretty much every subject within social studies. I have taught World History, U.S. History, Government, and Economics. For the last six years, I have fallen pretty steadily into AP U.S. History and AP Macroeconomics as my main course. Subjects that I've also taught include Current Events, AP Comparative Government and Politics and have really kind of run the gamut of courses we offered. I even once taught an 8th grade Civics and Civic Engagement course in our accelerated middle school, and that was interesting.

Jessica

We both teach a lot of economics, so that's something we have in common.

David

That's tremendous. And another thing is that you deserve both deserve our gratitude. We're so grateful for what you do in teaching. You've had a wealth of experience, and I really appreciate your taking the time. I know, Chris, with your school starting tomorrow, this is an incredibly busy time. So why don't we start with him and go back and forth with a little comparison, if you don't mind? Chris, what does going back to school mean for you in Chandler and then Jessica, I'll ask you to address the same question.

Chris

Tomorrow is the first day of in-service for teachers to go back and our student population will begin next Wednesday. They have the option of either starting virtually, or entirely online. Entirely online would be run through an online academy that our district has that uses a fully formed self-paced curriculum that the students will be working through on their own. The virtual model will be run through Google classroom, where each student would be placed into a class through their home school – so Basha High School for me – and the teacher would be responsible for teaching the class on the school's regular schedule every day through Google classroom, using all of the resources that we have with that including Microsoft Teams and Google Meet in order to get students into a virtual classroom. Then we will also record the lessons that we are doing, so that some students who do not have the option of being able to attend on any given day for a given period, can go back and watch the activities that were done after the fact.

David

Do you know yet – and then Jessica, I will ask you to address these same kind of contingencies –do you know yet what you will be deploying or how you will be dividing your time?

Chris

I think that it's really going to be a trial and error experience where the students are going to have to provide a lot of feedback for what works and what doesn't work. I don't think that any of my colleagues or I fully expect that we're going to get it right the first week or the first couple of weeks. And so I think that speaking with a number of my social studies colleagues, we're planning on a combination of all of the things that we would like to do in person as well. Hopefully there will be some larger class discussions, some small group discussions. We want to get primary sources in front of them and have them look at documents. We're going to start with thesis crafting and getting into the idea of putting together an argumentative response to some of these critical questions [from our standards].

David

That's great, and Jessica, what are you expecting as your school gets ready to go back?

Jessica

Well, first, I'm expecting for people to appreciate the subject of history more than ever before. I never knew people would be so interested in the 1918 flu pandemic unit that I taught. So I really think BRI right now is so needed. Our governor has moved the students' start date back to late August, and the teachers' start date for my district is mid August. Parents, students have the option to come back in person in late August, or to do our online option, and the teachers will teach both the online and the in-class, and the hope is for it to essentially be as comparable online to in-person, as close as we can get it. I don't know that we will have a huge number go online. I cannot get internet access at my home yet in the summer of 2020. It's not a cost issue: it's really not there yet. So many teachers and students are in that same boat. We do have things like we set up wi-fi hot spots around town, but you do have to know where, and that then means someone has to get the kid to the to the hot spot. Our governor just announced a huge, multi-million dollar grant to help work on this Internet problem with electric companies running wire right now trying to get Internet. So I do anticipate a good chunk in person because of that issue. Now, in spring, how we addressed that is that if you could not get Internet, we did have the wi-fi hotspots, but also we left socially-distanced paper copies of all the lessons around town. We had buses running, delivering things. So we did the old paper method, and we made it work. I'm very proud of all those districts that don't have Internet for many of their students that, as they say, found a way to pivot. And we did it, so we'll do it again.

David

That's amazing. Let's just take something like a course in history. And then, Chris, I'll ask you to touch on this a little bit, and cover the question of the digital divide in Chandler. Jessica, you talked about the need for those course packets. Let's say you're teaching a course in American history. What can an online resource mean for you? What would it mean if it was an application that didn't require high speed or even any speed Internet? Do students have devices?

Jessica

We are a one to one school so that would be amazing. Now, in the classroom, the reason I've gone with *Life, Liberty* this year is because I do anticipate we'll have a good number of kids come back, and since we all have our own devices, I wanted something that was no touch –

no more textbooks, no more sharing things, no more sharing worksheets. In a pandemic year, for every student to already have everything they need on their school-distributed device is a life-saver. That's why I think this is going to be perfect for this year.

David

That's good to hear. Would it make a difference if it was an application that didn't require students having access to the Internet then?

Jessica

Yes, but I'm just going to think happy thoughts and say we're going to be able to stay in school this year.

David

Well, we certainly hope for that and hope for good health for all. It sounds like some of your students really do travel quite a way on the bus or otherwise to even get to the school building?

Jessica

Yes, indeed. And I'm so ready to see them again. Masks are mandated by our governor, but they will see my eyes smiling at them.

David

That's great. Chris, what does the digital divide mean for you at Basha in Chandler, Arizona?

Chris

I think right now the biggest thing with *Life, Liberty* is that we're not going to have anything physical that we're going to have to distribute to students. Obviously, starting virtually, the expectation for them to come in and pick up textbooks simply is just not one that we can have. So to have the ability to start week one with primary source readings, secondary source readings, in a text that is already put together for teachers to use and for students to have a central place to go and not have to go to a number of different locations online to get what they're looking for, is really convenient for us. I agree that the ability for students who don't have technology and wouldn't necessarily have to use, you know, the Internet in order to get it, would be great. Fortunately for my district, that is less of a

concern, it sounds like, than for Jessica. We are not a one-to-one school. So the hope is that most students already do have some form of technology that they're going to be able to use. But our district is providing for the contingencies where students don't have that technology and they're giving out technology for students. I know that we've got wi-fi hotspots that we are trying to set up in different communities that will need that for students, but for the text itself, I think that having everything in one convenient location is really going to be the biggest benefit as we start this school year under these pandemic conditions.

David

It really makes us happy that it's going to be a useful product for both of you, and we'll pass that along to our technology partner, OpenStax. For about the same amount of time that BRI has been around, this group [OpenStax], out of Rice University, has been providing free digital resources to college students, and this is one of their first forays, with BRI, into the high school marketplace. Have either of you used online resources in the past? It sounds like both of you have had quite a bit of experience with doing so.

Jessica

Well, I use all kinds of online resources from BRI to iCivics to National Geographic to the National Endowment for the Humanities, and the Library of Congress. So if we're in the classroom, we are constantly online. And to back up what Chris said, the fact that we can do all of this from primary sources to speeches to portraits, in one place, and it's no touch, no sharing physically, is amazing this year.

David

That's great. Chris, how about for you, are you a curator and entrepreneur like that?

Chris

Absolutely. As a teacher, you find whatever resources you can and you use them as best you can. So I've used BRI, your Documents of Freedom, in the past and a number of different courses, National Endowment for the Humanities, National Portrait Gallery, Street, Law, whatever is out there that is given freely to teachers to use, we make it worth our while. And as much as we can, giving that access to students in a central place, whether it's a class website or what have you, downloadable PDF documents, things that they can access from their phone in class or they can access at their residence so that

they don't have to be carting around massive textbooks or they don't have to be worrying about losing worksheets. That's really been a positive thing, I think, in education.

Jessica

Schools are so tight on money right now, and textbooks are a giant expense. Even at a tiny school, you spend thousands of dollars on textbooks. So to have this free at a time when schools can really use that extra money, is fabulous.

David

What does that mean for Advanced Placement? You know, we designed this resource to be used to satisfy the College Board's new standards, as the first free, online resource that meets all of those requirements. And, by our estimation, there are about a thousand of them. I'm sure that you're both familiar with them. But what does that mean, Jessica, for your school and the possibility of AP? And then, Chris, if you could address the same, please?

Jessica

Well, at my school, I am the concurrent college history teacher, so the students can get 12 hours of college history through me before they graduate. We are graduating students now – and Chris may have this at his school – we're graduating students with 30 hours done with their freshman year of college already for free. And that's amazing in raising our college graduation rates eventually. So this book is perfect for those concurrent college students because I feel it is a very good bridge between high school and college for a 17 year old. It's the perfect bridge between those two worlds.

David

Concurrent is the same as dual enrollment, right?

Jessica

That's correct. While they are in that class, they are students of the local college and I report to the local college about those students.

David

That's great. Do you see that as a growth area for your area, Jessica? And perhaps if you think across the kind of rural landscape, is this something that you would foresee growing?

Jessica

Absolutely. I know many states around me have low college graduation rates and we're seeing them go up. And when you see the statistics of how much impact these courses have for students, it's amazing. Students who used to go in as freshmen with no hours, would drop out because they were overwhelmed. Now they are going in fully prepared. They have all these hours of college behind them, and we're seeing so much stronger performance once they get to college. So it's raising our college graduation rate in the end.

David

That is super exciting. You know, one of the things that that we've seen in studies of textbook costs at the community college level is that it can be the number one factor. And, indeed, this is true for AP and whether or not a school district will include an AP class. So on both the dual enrollment and the AP side, the cost of the textbook when it's \$200 per pupil, can be a determinative factor in whether or not they're able to avail themselves of either of these options. Chris, has that been a factor for you? I know you've taught AP in the past.

Chris

Yes, and I am also a dual enrollment instructor through our local community college. So that's great in that we have students who get the flexibility of looking to earn a passing score on the AP exam, which might transfer to a school that they're looking to go to out of state, across the country, or students who are really focused on in-state university and wanting to ensure that they get that college credit. And in US History – which may not necessarily be their field of interest – it allows them to get some of their prerequisites out of the way. It's really been beneficial. I think that having a singular textbook that meets the standards of the College Board and meets the standards of the local community colleges, is really essential so that these students aren't being burdened with so many different resources that they're being asked to go between. We look for the classic textbook, and then there's also the supplemental books that help them prepare specifically for the AP exam, or you're working with your local community college trying to make sure that your syllabus that meets College Board standards, also meets their standards, and you want to try and find a good balance between all of them, but one that doesn't burden the student with too much information at their hands, or they're just going to feel overwhelmed before they even get started.

David

That's interesting. There are about 466 components that are part of *Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness*. We designed it with a lot of educator input, with the idea that putting more into the options allows the educator – who we take to be among the most entrepreneurial of people in our society – can take that material and really “plug and play.” Is it fair to say we’ve been led well by those who helped us pilot and test this? Is that also the way you think about a course like this and arrange it on a calendar where you're assigning things that are going to meet the individual needs of the needs of individual classrooms.

Jessica

Yeah, absolutely, because I like that with *Life, Liberty*, I don't necessarily have to teach everything in order exactly as written. I love that I can talk to the 9th and 10th grade history teachers and say, hey, what have you covered? What have you not covered? What do they need to review? And it's so easy to just pull out those things based on that individual group of students. So I think it's fabulous. Or I can jump around, modify it, just change this for what my class needs, for what first hour our needs versus what fifth hour needs versus online or in person.

David

That's great. Chris?

Chris

Absolutely, the adaptability is really what a teacher, I think, is looking for in any resource, because every class is going to be different. Some classes are going to need more supplemental materials than others will. You're not going to want to teach every single page within any textbook and you're going to have some areas where you need to focus more on the primary documents versus looking at maps, or you're looking at charts and data. And so with *Life, Liberty*, what I've seen so far, is the ability to pull whatever you might need for your individual class from there, from a single resource. And that is a huge time saver for teachers. And I think it's really going to function well.

David

That's great. One thing I'll invite is, as you both dig in, is to please let us know about the resources, and features because educators across the country, sharing ideas about how they have loaded that content, or things that you see that just aren't working right, it

supports the whole idea behind doing an online resource, and one of the things that we think it has real value over those 10 pound textbooks, which is that we can do version 2.0. We want to know when there's an error, where there are corrections needed, so if you see things like that, we invite your candid feedback. What we want to do is base this resource's next iteration on a co-creation with you and other educators around the country that are using it. We want to make it a better product for everybody.

Jessica

I shared this with my principal. I said, "I found this online textbook so when they're physically in class, they don't have to share books and get close to each other." And he said, "Share that. Tell everybody at the school about it. Share that out." And so I emailed it out and I've already had teachers coming up to me, saying things like, "Will they make a textbook for my subject? Can I get one for 9th grade English? And they like that. So I think people are hearing about these and realizing this is the wave of the future and it's so much more valuable than a physical textbook.

David

Well, that's exciting, I'll pass that along to OpenStax. The good news is, Jessica, they are planning to do other subject areas with other partners so we'll keep you keep you posted on that. I wanted to run something by both of you as we have about 20 minutes left in our conversation. Newsela has reported that administrators say that social studies teachers use the regular textbook, the thing that you're provided by the district or the state, about one out of every two days. Teachers say they use that taxpayer-funded textbook, about one out of every five. What do you say? Chris, do you want to go first?

Chris

Sure, I'd be happy to. I would say it would depend on the resources that are within the textbook. Because textbooks are very expensive, as we all know, so the district is not likely to be renewing textbooks every year, and so the resources that are contained within the physical textbooks are likely to be a little bit older and may not be as relevant or cutting edge as what you can find online. So while there are absolutely valuable resources that exist in my textbook, I will definitely supplement from what I find from organizations throughout the educational spectrum into my classroom. So between saying one out of every two days and one out of every five days, I'm probably somewhere in between those, maybe one out of every three or four days, I'm looking to use something from the textbook.

Jessica

I will add to that. I think teachers aren't using textbooks every day, or every other day necessarily, because I think teachers are super creative, and I think teachers have really awesome, great innovative ideas, and the textbook is just kind of the base and you add all this cool stuff onto it. I'm on 500 different email lists so when Mount Vernon sends me an awesome lesson, I'm going to use that over the textbook. Or when there's some sort of "Win the White House" simulation online game, I'm going to use that. So I don't think textbooks aren't getting used because they're terrible. I think teachers have so many wonderful ideas that there's not time for it all. Something has got to give some days know that makes a lot of sense.

David

Can we talk a little bit about how COVID has impacted your teaching, and kind of looking beyond to the time when – and we hope it will be sooner rather than later – when students will be able to return to the classroom? What are some of the effects that you think you're going to be contending with no matter the public health situation and what are some of the longer-term ramifications of this period of time?

Jessica

I'm already seeing the ramification that education is being appreciated more than ever before. It's very hard to be positive right now, but I actually see some positive changes happening and I see teachers and educators really being honored and people are starting to say we need more money for schools, we need more resources for schools. Maybe we need smaller class sizes all the time? Maybe we need devices for every single student? So a positive I see is a greater value than ever before on education, and I've never had so many people tell me, "I appreciate you for being a teacher." So I see wonderful things happening from a horrible event. I also see people valuing history more than ever before. When people say we're living in unprecedented times, I say, "No, we're not. Read a history book. It's not unprecedented times." Get out a history book and you will say, "Oh, something like this has happened before. Here's what we can learn from it." And I think these young people are going to be a very strong generation, especially our seniors who just graduated. I've seen so much strength from them and from their parents during a very difficult time.

David

Thank you. Chris?

Chris

What I have seen demonstrated the most is how flexibility is a huge asset in education. We understand that we are living in an unprecedented time, but we have the resources, and if we pair those with creative thinking and determination then we can find a solution to work our way through what we're going through right now. We saw it with our students last year. Like Jessica said, you know, our seniors were incredibly resilient and this was definitely not the end of their high school career that they were looking for, but they found a way to work through it. If we can channel that type of adaptability into our classrooms at the start of this year, then maybe when our public health situation has improved down the road, then we will have the ability to reflect on the changes that were made and whether those changes have been for the better or for the worse in education. And we may decide that we actually don't want to go back to some of the old ways we did things prior to 2019-2020.

David

Yes. Thank you for both of those thoughtful and really heartening responses. I want to close, if we could, with reflection. I have two major things to ask you to reflect on. The first is barriers. Our nation has been caught up, not only in COVID, but in a time in which cries for racial justice echo across the land. I wonder if you could talk about what you see. Both of you have taught so many different subjects under social studies, some with a history focus, with a civics focus, even economics. Are there barriers to your being able to get into conversations at a deep level, that address these questions that are before us as a people? I wonder if you could just address how you plan to do that, especially in the context of history, and we'll start, Jessica, with you, and then Chris.

Jessica

OK, I hope I'm answering the question. This will be my 18th year teaching – always teenagers – for almost two decades. And I have seen students become incredibly open minded in recent years, much more open minded than ever before, much more inquisitive and questioning than ever before and wanting to know about different people, different beliefs. I have students requesting that now, whereas years ago I don't think I had that. I also have incredibly supportive administration, and I think a positive about a small school is that I personally know my principal, my superintendent, my assistant superintendent, and they know me. And if there's an issue I want to teach that I think could be a hot button issue, I would feel 100% comfortable going to them and saying, hey, we need to address this issue. I want you to know we're going to address it. Let me know what you think. So I think if I ever have to touch on an issue that I think it's going to be very “hot button,” I would simply tell my admin and say the kids want to talk about it. They've asked me about it. I

hope you're comfortable with it. I think that's what 2020 is probably going to be, especially with it being an election year. So I may have hit what you wanted?

David

Yes. Thank you. Chris, thoughts on that?

Chris

Yeah, I would piggyback onto what Jessica said and say that at this time, students have so much information at their disposal at all times, from all over the range of what are considered credible or not credible sources. So it's important for us as educators, and particularly social studies teachers, to be able to work with students to teach them how to take information from all of these different sources and to critically analyze them and come up with their own conclusions and form their own claims and arguments. The biggest constraint I see with this is just time. We have so much information to get into our classes in terms of curriculum so we need to cut here and there in order to make sure we get through what we need to get through. And now we're trying to add on top of that the really pressing need of having students understand how to analyze as many different sources as they can on their own. And that just adds that much more weight into what we are doing. So I feel like the biggest constraint that we face is time and wherever, as a teacher, you can pick up a few minutes here and there in terms of time, it's just incredibly valuable.

David

One of the things that we really tried to do with *Life, Liberty* was to build viewpoint diversity into its very makeup, its DNA. Thus, 96 scholars from a variety of different subfields. Point-counterpoint is one of the things that we call out. But really point-counterpoint is the whole of the resource. When you touch on some of the very controversial debates that have marked our history, and address those tough or hard questions of history, do you feel like you have the support as you address this, at the administrative level? Are parents desirous of viewpoint diverse perspectives in social studies classrooms, and particularly in history?

Jessica

I really think they are. I think parents want diverse viewpoints. I think the more diversity you have in education, the better educated you are, and I think that all those amazing parents who want diverse viewpoints aren't always the parents who make it on the news. I

encounter great parents who say, “Thank you for teaching this. Thank you for telling them about this.” Yes, there are always going to be some “rough go’s,” but I feel very supported, especially because I feel that appreciation for education has really changed over the last few months. I feel more supported than ever before. So I guess if you get a couple of negative things you just have to “shake it off.”

Chris

Parents want their students to be skilled, and so, regardless of the controversial topic you might be looking at in US history or in government or in economics, or whatever it is, I think that if you are teaching students how to approach that debate from a perspective where they are using all of the material that is relevant to that conversation to come up with their own ideas, then parents value that. They want to know that the students are being prepared for life after high school. If you are approaching things from a skill based perspective, then I think that parents are always going to support that.

David

That’s such an interesting insight, thank you. That is illuminating and good to know, too. BRI has started talking to, and we have weekly meetings with, other organizations including iCivics, the National Constitution Center, Mikva Challenge, Generation Citizen, Facing History and Ourselves, [and others]. We all support teachers and during this critical time in our nation's history and throughout the COVID crisis, we also wanted to see if there was a place for us to talk to parents. As we go forward, we are interested to see if you have ideas about the building of those bridges, which is such an important part of your work, and it helps that parents have been given more insight into the challenges of teaching than perhaps they had even a few years ago. We hope that they come not only with appreciation, but also thinking about ways that we can build together to really support young people in their learning journeys. We have a couple of minutes left, and I'd ask each of you to take about a minute and sound an autobiographical note, if you don't mind, please. Please share what impelled you to teaching and what do you hope to accomplish this year in particular? That would be a great way to wrap up this wonderful conversation. Jessica, please.

Jessica

OK. I did not have the most classically wonderful childhood or teenage years, and education was my way of bettering my situation, doing better than those around me, and becoming a successful person in life. I knew that education was the only way I was going to do that, and from a very young age, I worked very hard to have an education, and have it propel me forward. And it did, and that's why I love teaching at a rural, high poverty, Title One

school, because I can truly look at those kids who are facing so many challenges and say, “I was there, and I am now successful, and the only way I did it was through education.” I can make that personal connection and I am a testament that it works.

David

That's great. Thank you. Chris?

Chris

I was never the kid who said that I wanted to be a teacher when I grow up. I probably would have said, “Well, I think at some point after I've retired, I maybe could teach.” Then, as I went along in my college experience, I realized that the courses that really stuck with me, and that I kept coming back to, were all the ones that I enjoyed when I was in high school, and those were the social studies courses. I enjoyed having conversations with people about these topics and what role they played in our lives, so I felt like that was going to be where I could be the happiest and maybe make a difference. So I decided that teaching would be a worthwhile shot, and here I am 13 years later, and I can't imagine doing anything else. I really do value the ability to further a conversation about how all of these aspects of our country – whether it's history, government, or economics – how they have impacted our development as a society, and what that means for us going forward, because, you know, nobody is able to predict the future. We're just busy trying to sift through whatever remnants there are from the past and figure out how we can apply them going forward. So if students can see the value in that, then I think that my time has been worthwhile.

Jessica

I want to add that I think teenagers are amazing. I get very tired of people talking about, “Oh, young people this and young people that...” Young people are awesome. We have a great generation of young people coming up, and if you are in the schools, you see it. They are fun, they are smart, and I've never seen a group so ready to make a difference.

David

That's awesome. That's such a great note both of you ended on. I want to thank you both for your work. I really enjoyed our conversation. It was illuminating on so many fronts, and helpful to myself and to my BRI colleagues. We'll stay in touch, and please reach out to us with your thoughts or ideas on how we can support your work going forward. I hope you have a really healthy and excellent start to the school year.

Jessica

And good luck, Chris, out in Arizona!

Chris

Good luck to you as well. And thank you for the time and thank you for the resources that you're providing for social studies educators. It's really important.

