



Virgil Middle School's Hand Shake Initiative

Initial Proposal

Project Title: Hand Shake Initiative

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Reason for Project: To promote Civic Understanding & Responsibility through a bi-coastal teacher guided interaction of students using technology (Edmodo, Zondle, Twitter, Email, Skype) while promoting EL growth & a breaking down of stereotypes.

Background: As Social Science teachers, there is an honored historical tradition to the "hand shake." According to archeologists, the first recorded handshakes occurred in Ancient Greece between soldiers to demonstrate a gesture of peace and lack of weapons. As the centuries continued, handshakes became the universal sign which began peace treaties, ended wars, and/or initiated "talks" between warring nations. In this global age, we are beginning to understand the access to a technological world beyond our local schools. However, the students are lacking a basic understanding of the "real lives" of students beyond those nearest them. Furthermore, there are perpetuated myths and stereotypes about particular areas in the United States by our students.

We find that there is a need for our students to reach out both utilizing technology as well as "snail mail" in order to promote basic skills, EL processes, content/core standard driven skills, and promoting a real life "attachment" and understanding of a culture/group outside their own daily interaction.

Initial Grouping: Social Sciences (6th and 8th) test classes beginning January (next semester.) Will reach out to appropriate East Coast pairs (with similar SES breakdown). We feel that we want the kinks to be worked out before implementing.

Status: Currently have a Twitter Page, Facebook Grouping (closed only to teachers/administrators), Edmodo Group and a Gmail Account. Working on Zondle account.

Class Incorporation: Once a semester whole class Skype Chat Discussion (with guided teacher prompts), Zondle worksheets/tests (involving pairing up with a Coastal partner to complete), Edmodo Group tasks (pairing up within coast and bi-coastal groups to achieve goals/tasks) and letter writing skills (must receive actually written material, promoting EL skills & possibility content driven materials). All items guided by a bi-coastal planning, district/department pacing & content driven assessments/exercises.