Abstract

The purpose of this qualitative research study was to implement historical immersion activities to high school history students for the purpose of helping them to develop a deeper understanding of, and authentic empathy for, studying history. My findings have indicated that my students did in fact find deeper meaning in their historical studies, as well as a significant level of enjoyment in the research, reading, writing, role-playing, and simulation activities in which they participated.

Students often complain about how they find history to be boring, or too difficult. It was my intention to reverse any preconceived negative notions students may have about studying history. The activities facilitated in this study enabled students to express themselves about historical events in an informed way. Students developed empathy for people of the past, but eventually learned to do so authentically, by setting aside their present-day ways of thinking as best as they could and make sense of what people of the past were experiencing in the context of the mindsets, culture, and events of the time period in which those people lived.

My intention is to continue using and adapting historical immersion in my high school history classes and it is my hope that other educators will do the same.