

Pearl Harbor in the classroom

CHS

Pearl Harbor attack blended into CHS curriculum

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CLINTON - Clinton High School social studies teacher Bill Misiewicz realizes that students today enter the classroom with inaccurate ideas about major historical events. He said that also is true of their understanding of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor that occurred 75 years ago today.

"A lot of their history is semi-twisted," Misiewicz said. "In the old days, you had people who were directly impacted by the war. Students today see it as ancient

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Clinton High School Social Studies teacher Bill Misiewicz

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history. We see that their schema is what the world of entertainment and the world of Wikipedia gives them. My schema was built on my Dad and my teachers who served." Today, students in all the history and social studies courses at Clinton High School will spend some time discussing and learning about the events of Dec. 7, 1941. Misiewicz said that during the big anniversary years, such as the 70th and now the 75th, the social studies faculty incorporate Pearl Harbor into the day's lesson. In social studies courses, students will see a 10-minute news clip about the attack. In history classes, interactive sites from MSNBC and National Geographic will be used to show students firsthand accounts from veterans and survivors.

These sites also have interactive maps that show how the attack unfolded.

The goal is to teach when, why and how the event happened, as well as the impact the event still has on the country and the world.

For Misiewicz's AP history course, he pulls from his two visits to Pearl Harbor and many historical texts to provide a more in-depth lesson. He uses a copy of the *Clinton Herald* from the day of the attack, as well as a yearbook from 1941, to show students the impact the attack had on Clinton. Students are also given readings that separate the facts from the fiction in the 2001 feature film "Pearl Harbor." Misiewicz also will have his students participate in several in-class exercises that cover whatif scenarios. One exercise requires the students to consider what would have happened, politically and

militarily, if the attack had been detected earlier and stopped. Another requires students to consider what the military response might have been if Pearl Harbor was not attacked and the Japanese instead focused on strikes in the Phillipines.

Misiewicz added that teaching about major historical events such as Pearl Harbor is an opportunity to help students improve their fact-checking abilities. He sees the impact unreliable sources have on students' understanding of history when he contrasts Pearl Harbor with events such as the Sept. 11, 2001 terrorist attacks or the 1963 assassination of President John F. Kennedy.

"The younger students are more likely to believe conspiracies," Misiewicz said.

With his lesson on Pearl Harbor, Misiewicz also hopes his students learn to consider all viewpoints.

"History is biased, " Misiewicz said."Generally we only listen to or read the viewpoint of the winners." That idea became clear to Misiewicz on his first trip to Pearl Harbor. At one point, he joined a tour that was composed entirely of Japanese tourists. He said it was interesting to contrast, and learn from, the different experiences and ways of talking about the event that he had not been exposed to before.



Clinton High School Social Studies teacher Bill Misiewicz teaches sophomores Aiden Lubs and Zach Bohle about Pearl Harbor on Tuesday.

Rachael Keating/Clinton Herald