

Title Page & Abstract

An Interview with Meghan Kessler, PhD

Part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library
Education is Key - Civics Education Oral History project

Interview # ECE-A-L-2020-052

Dr. Meghan Kessler, assistant professor of teacher education at the University of Illinois - Springfield, was interviewed on the date listed below as part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library's *Education is Key – Civics Education* Oral History project.

Interview dates & location:

Date: July 31, 2020 Location: Telephonic interview during COVID-19 pandemic

Interview Format: Digital audio

Interviewer: Philip Pogue, ALPL volunteer

Transcription by: _____

Edited by: _____

Transcript being
processed

Total Pages: _____ Total Time: 1:23 / 1.38 hrs

Accessioned into the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Archives on March 23, 2021.

The interview is archived at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library in Springfield, Illinois.

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Abstract

Meghan Kessler, *Education is Key—Civics*, ECE-A_L-2020-052

Biographical Information Overview of Interview: Meghan Kessler was born in Aurora, Illinois in 1985. She grew up in Leland, Illinois and attended Somanauk High School. In 2008 she graduated from Augustana College, where she majored in history and secondary education. Meghan earned a MA in Teaching and Leadership from St. Xavier University, Chicago in 2012. She taught social studies at Manual High School (Peoria), Monmouth-Roseville High School, and Greenview Junior-Senior High School. While at Greenview she also coached the Academic Challenge teams. Meghan then became a full time doctoral student, majoring in curriculum and instruction, at the University of Illinois (Urbana-Champaign). While there, Meghan served as a teaching assistant, a supervisor of student teachers and received a Seymour Stiss Fellowship. Earning her Ph.D. in 2018, Dr. Kessler joined the University of Illinois-Springfield faculty where she is an assistant professor of teacher education and a Golden Apple Advisor. Dr Kessler focused her research on teacher education and evaluation, social studies education, mentoring, social justice and equity in education, and collaborative learning. She has been a participant in the American Democracy Project funded by the McCormick Foundation and IL State University.

Dr. Kessler discusses social studies education at the University of Illinois-Springfield, including the program's course requirements, pre-teaching experiences, and other state social studies requirements. She reviews how UIS prepares social studies majors to deal with controversial topics, universal design lesson plans, civic engagement in the community, and service learning projects which are all part of Illinois's semester-long high school civics course requirements. Also discussed are how UIS coursework incorporates the 2017 social studies standards and how news literacy becomes part of a social studies curriculum. Meghan also reviews how remote learning since Mid-March 2020 impacted social studies education, and how modifications were needed to accommodate remote learning. Plans for the fall semester at UIS was also covered, and the employment of social studies majors during a period of lockdowns was discussed. Finally, Dr. Kessler reviewed how education in the future will incorporate the events of the COVID-19 pandemic, including racial justice protests, civil unrest, and the 2020 elections.

Subject Headings/Key Words: teaching social studies in junior and senior high schools; supervising student teachers; requirements for social studies majors; University of Illinois Springfield; civics education on controversial subjects; universal design lesson plans; news literacy; Illinois's 2017 social studies standards; remote learning during the pandemic; Golden Apple pre-service program

Notes to the Reader: Readers of the oral history memoir should bear in mind that this is a transcript of the spoken word, and that the interviewer, interviewee and editor sought to preserve the informal, conversational style that is inherent in such historical sources. The Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library is not responsible for the factual accuracy of the memoir, nor for the views expressed therein. We leave these for the reader to judge.

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