

Title Page & Abstract

An Interview with Diana Hess, PhD

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

Interview # ECE-A-L-2020-034

Diana Hess, the Professor Curriculum and Instruction and Dean of the School of Education at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, 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: Jul 15, 2020

Location: Telephonic interview during the COVID-19 pandemic

Interview Format: Digital audio

Interviewer: Philip Pogue, ALPL volunteer

Transcription by: _____

Edited by: _____

Total Pages: _____ Total Time: 1:33 / 1.55 hrs

Accessioned into the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Archives on October 16, 2020.

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

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Transcript being
processed

Abstract

Diana Hess, *Education is Key-Civics*, ECE-A-L-2020-034

Biographical Information Overview of Interview: Diana Hess was born in DeKalb, Illinois in 1957, and grew up in DeKalb. She attended both the University Lab School (K-8) and DeKalb High School, graduating in 1975. Diana attended Western Illinois University in Macomb where she majored in political science and education, graduating in 1979. She earned her MA in Educational Leadership from the University of Illinois and her PhD in Curriculum and Instruction in Social Studies, Educational Policy, and Law from the University of Washington. Diana's work experience includes serving as a Congressional Intern for U.S. Representative Tom Railsback, teaching social studies at Downers Grove South (serving two years as union president), being an assistant director at the Constitutional Rights Foundation Chicago, a visiting professor at Columbia University, serving as a Senior Vice President of the Spencer Foundation Chicago and serving at the University of Wisconsin Madison as the Professor Curriculum and Instruction and Dean of the School of Education. Diana has authored or co-authored award winning books dealing with Civics Education including *The Political Classroom: Ethics and Evidence in Democratic Education* (2015) and *Controversy in the Classroom* (2009). She has received numerous research grants aimed at improving civics education. Two of her initiatives at the University of Wisconsin include the Grand Challenges program and the Discussion Project. Diana holds the Karen A Falk Distinguished Chair of Education and in 2019 was elected to the National Academy of Education.

Dean Hess examines the role of civics education from her perspective as an author and researcher on the subject. She discussed her two books as well as her several research projects, focusing on how controversial issues in high school courses impact learning. She also reviews the importance of the Illinois Civics Mandate, which required the use of simulations, controversial topics, and service learning, and the importance of professional development for teachers. Also covered are the challenges in media literacy, the differences in high school and college civics education discussions, the impact of COVID-19 and the impact of the protests upon Civics Education in the 2020-21.

Subject Headings/Key Words: high schools civics education; *The Political Classroom: Ethics and Evidence in Democratic Education* (2015); *Controversy in the Classroom* (2009); teacher professional development for civics materials; Illinois Civics Education Mandate; teaching civics during COVID-19 pandemic; Wisconsin-Grand Challenges and the Discussion project

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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