

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Sarah Segal is a middle school teacher in Hood River, Oregon, specializing in history and social studies, language arts, and art. She has been a classroom teacher for more than 20 years, is a former president of the Oregon Council for the Social Studies (OCSS) and current member of the NCSS Book Award Committee.

Q. Why did you become a teacher?

A. I've always loved learning. In college I studied archaeology, and even spent a summer working at a neanderthal site in France. However, after a year as an AmeriCorps volunteer, I realized I'm most inspired by engaging in my community, especially with students in my school and their families.

Q. What teaching success or career achievement are you most proud of?

A. A group of my middle school students collaborated with the Minoru Yasui Legacy Project in 2013 to ask President Obama to honor the Oregon-born Japanese American attorney, Yasui, with the Presidential Medal of Freedom. The endeavor was successful, and our class continued honoring the civil rights hero by working with Oregon legislators and former-Governor Katherine Brown to formally dedicate March 28th in Yasui's honor.

Q. When and why did you join NCSS?

A. I initially joined NCSS in 2010 to access classroom resources. However, beyond resources, many of my NCSS colleagues



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provide me with a thoughtful compass for responsible classroom teaching.

Q. How has being a part of a professional association enriched your career?

A. Being part of professional associations, in both the humanities and sciences, has provided me with community. When I first joined the Oregon Council for the Social Studies (OCSS), Gayle Thieman, 2007 NCSS president and professor at Portland State University, quickly took me under her wing. In addition, Kristy Brugar, Social Studies Education professor at the University of Oklahoma, is my faithful collaborator on the NCSS Book Award Committee. Over the years, both these women have become trusted friends. As a middle school teacher, this year my teaching partner is a young first-year educator. Although I am the official mentor, everyday I learn more about the future of education from him. My advice to all educators, regardless of where they are in their career, is to find and develop intergenerational mentorships and friendships. Surround yourself with people who inspire and support you. NCSS is a great place to find this community. 📌



Middle School Teachers, we want to hear from you! Tell us how you teach your favorite lesson. Is it about Reconstruction? The Spanish-American War? The Silk Road? Share your approach with other teachers. Submit an article to *Middle Level Learning* at www.editorialmanager.com/ncssjournals.

MIDDLE LEVEL LEARNING

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