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MIKE’S NOTES

One of the many ways teachers can earn Act 48 continuing education hours and get accustomed to teaching with primary sources is to field test a lesson plan that was developed by a teacher or TPS Instructional Specialist. This is an alternative to designing primary source-based lesson plans from scratch and helps teachers new to teaching with primary sources understand how primary sources are used to teach different subjects. The process of field testing is to visit the TPS lessons web site, search for and select a lesson plan, field test it, and, finally, provide feedback through an electronic survey.

To begin, go to http://www.tpslessons.org/initiative/. There, click on the “Field Test a Lesson Plan” in the lower right hand corner and follow the prompt to “Search Lesson Plans.” Once there, teachers can view lesson plans and choose one that interests them. For details, contact Nik Roberts at 724-938-6025.

ASK NIK

This month, our Library of Congress (LOC) “searching tutorial series” features the newly revamped Prints and Photographs Online Catalog (PPOC). The site contains one million images of educational significance. I developed a 5-minute instructional video that walks educators through the basic search and retrieval functionalities of PPOC. The video also demonstrates a way to incorporate search and retrieval strategies into a classroom assignment. To access the video, click the following link: http://workforce.calu.edu/roberts_n/Jing/searchppoc.swf. It will open in your browser. Start the video by clicking the play button in the center of the screen. After learning how to search and retrieve primary sources items, give it a try yourself. Please email me (roberts_n@calu.edu) if you use PPOC sources in your class!

LYNNE SAYS

Typically children forget some of what they learned during the school year if they don’t engage in learning activities in the summer. Research shows that a child could lose up to 2.6 months of math and 25% of reading fluency if there are no learning activities over the summer months. Following are some links that can be passed on to parents and students for summer learning. This first link shows how to keep your child reading over the summer: http://www.ehow.com/how_2176128_keep-kid-reading-over-summer.html. This next link helps reluctant readers read over the summer: http://www.teachingkindergarten.com/summer/reading/39287.html.

You can also direct parents to this next site for math activities over the summer: http://www.greatschools.org/students/homework-help/build-math-skills.gs?content=103. The following is a link to fun: http://www.teachingk-8.com/archives/how_to/how_to_make_summer_learning_fun.html.

TPS SERVICES/EVENTS

The 2010 TPS Summer Institute, Teaching "Pop Culture" Using Primary Sources: The Coca Cola Case Study, will be a two-section workshop series that focuses on oral history projects in the classroom. Teaching "Pop Culture" Using Primary Sources: The Coca Cola Case Study is a two-credit continuing professional education course offered to grades 5-12 teachers. The course meets the following project development criteria, teaching techniques, and strategies: oral history project-based learning, inquiry-based learning, and teaching with primary sources. Teacher-participants will acquire the necessary skills to plan and implement an educational oral history project. Backed by Pennsylvania teaching standards, the oral history project that teacher-participants will learn to develop for their classrooms is based on: (1) the primary source inquiry process—to provide background content knowledge for an oral history topic; and, (2) oral history techniques and project-based learning design. Out of class work includes: creation of an Action Plan for Learning (APL), creation of an interview guide, creation of a thematic time log, required readings, oral history reflections, and preparation for an in-class APL presentation. Contact Lynne Berdar at 724-938-6025 or berdar@calu.edu.

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Make A Splash @ Your Library—Summer Reading Extravaganza http://www.clpgh.org/summer/
SOCIAL MEDIA AND EDUCATION by NIK

Our discussion continues on the educational uses of new social media initiatives that have been implemented at the Library of Congress (LOC). The focus of this month’s column is on Really Simple Syndication, simply referred to as “RSS.” Represented by the orange image to the left, RSS provides a way for users to get updates from web sites via “feeds” By subscribing to RSS feeds, users can easily stay current with the sites that they visit most often. As a web 2.0 technology, RSS feeds can greatly reduce the time that users spend on the web; this is because content is directed to users rather than users searching for content independently. I recommend that you get started by viewing the following instructional video: http://tinyurl.com/RSSgo. Next, you will have to set-up a RSS reader. The video suggested using Google Reader (www.google.com/reader), which is very easy to use. Following this, primary source educators can visit a LOC web page that lists the available RSS feeds (www.loc.gov/rss). Find the link near the bottom of the page, titled, “News for Teachers.” To establish a RSS feed for this item, click the orange RSS icon and sign in to your RSS Reader (if you are not already signed-in). Updates will immediately appear in your RSS Reader under the category, “News for Teachers.”

RESEARCH AND CURRENT THINKING

How can teachers help their students to begin thinking like historians? Teaching a way of thinking requires making thinking visible. We need to show students not only what historians think, but how they think, and then guide students as they learn to engage in this process. This month’s Research focuses on helping students develop historical thinking skills using primary sources. Following is an example:

Teaching Historical Thinking
Frederick D. Drake, ERIC Digest, 2002.

“Over the past decade, cognitive studies researcher Samuel Wineburg has conducted empirical studies to compare the way historians think about primary and secondary sources with the thinking processes of high school students and teachers. This digest addresses Wineburg’s conception of historical thinking and its application to the teaching and learning of history in schools.”

For a list of eleven resources about developing historical thinking skills, go to http://www.loc.gov/teachers/tps/quarterly/research.html

CENTER FOR ORAL HISTORY

Oral History Analysis classroom projects can use oral history collections from the Library of Congress. Following is a list of the collections available.

Veterans History Project http://www.loc.gov/vets/vets-home.html


American Life Histories, Manuscripts from the Federal Writers’ Project (WPA) http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/wpaintro/wpahome.html

Born in Slavery: Slave Narratives from the Federal Writers’ Project http://lcweb2.loc.gov/ammem/snhtml/snhome.html

Diplomacy: The Foreign Affairs


US-Russia Joint Commission Veterans Interview Database http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/ruint/


COMMUNITY AND CLASSROOM

Oral History Project-Based Learning Activities in the classroom can bring students in direct contact with community members and make for a rich learning experience. Classroom projects have been successful at other schools and there are many examples for review. Teachers considering Project-Based Learning Oral History projects should review previous successes and model their projects after others. Following is a list of links to classroom project examples. http://www.americancenturyproject.org/. The next link is for a pioneering secondary school project: www.foxfire.org. The World War II oral history archives from Rutgers University can be accessed at http://oralhistory.rutgers.edu/. For more guidance on using oral histories in the classroom, contact Lynne Berdar at Berdar@calu.edu or 724-938-6025.

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http://www.calu.edu/business-community/teaching-primary-sources/