TEACHING WITH PRIMARY SOURCES
AT CAL U
Level 2 primary source-based professional development

NOTES FROM THE DIRECTOR

Cal U Alumni workshop series now open to all teachers
In the recent past, only Cal U alumni were able to attend the Cal U Alumni monthly workshop series, which is a series of four workshop sessions offered on Monday or Tuesday evenings from 5:30 pm — 8:00 pm. Beginning in January, the workshop series is open to all K-12 teachers regardless if they are Cal U alumni or not. The workshops series offers a total of 12 Act 48 continuing education hours and is held on Cal U’s campus. This workshop series is designed to train teachers to Teach with Historic Places and is modeled on the National Park Service’s Teaching with Historic Places initiative. Professional development will focus on learning how historic places and primary sources are used to engage students while making teaching more exciting and meaningful. The focus will be on Donora, PA, and specifically, the 1948 Donora Smog incident, which was the impetus for clean air legislation nationwide. The incident will be featured on November 2nd on the Weather Channel’s When Weather Changed History program. The Donora Smog Museum houses the related primary source materials and participants will visit the museum in workshop number two. Participants will also learn how this instructional methodology can be applied to other local histories/communities using Donora as the case study/teaching model. Teachers will also learn about using online primary source digital collections for instructional purposes. Online primary source collections from the Library of Congress will be explored as they are authentic and trusted resources suitable across disciplines. Other trusted sites such as the National Archives and the National Gallery of Art will also be examined.
For more information about the upcoming Teaching with Historic Places workshop series, please contact Mrs. Donna Hoak at hoak@cup.edu or phone her at 724-938-6025. Online registration is available at http://www.cup.edu/education/aam/tpsworkshop.jsp

FROM THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

"America's Story from America's Library" wants you to have fun with history while learning at the same time. We want to put the story back in history and show you some things that you've never heard or seen before. The material you see comes from the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C. The Library is the largest in the world and has millions of amazing things that will surprise you. You may think all those items are books, but in fact, most of them are not. They are letters, diaries, records and tapes, films, sheet music, maps, prints, photographs and digital materials. Much of what you see on America's Library will be those non-book items, and many of those materials are found only in the collections of the Library of Congress. Teachers refer to these types of materials as "primary sources." They are called this because these materials are often the first, or primary, source of information. Although these materials tell many stories, they do not tell everything. Books and other resources are also very important. We hope the stories in America's Library will make you want to explore further. We hope you will find this web site entertaining and fun to use. And, of course, we hope you will learn something from it. The site was designed especially with young people in mind, but there are great stories for people of all ages, and we hope children and their families will want to explore this site together. For more information about America’s Story from America’s Library visit the web site http://www.americaslibrary.gov/cgi-bin/page.cgi
TEACHING WITH PRIMARY SOURCES AT CAL U

ANNEMARIE SAYS!

How America Uses Water

One of the features on the National Atlas site is the following one on water usage. Take a look! “Everyone knows that our population continues to grow. A census count in 1980 identified close to 227 million residents of the United States. Twenty years later, the Census Bureau tallied more than 281 million people here. But did you know that demand for water in the United States declined in 1985 and that it has remained fairly steady since then? In this issue you can read how changes in technology, in our laws, and in our economy, along with increased awareness of the need for water conservation, have resulted in more efficient use of the water from the Nation's rivers, lakes, reservoirs, and aquifers.” http://nationalatlas.gov/articles/water/a_wateruse.html

Visualization Projects

From the University Corporation for Atmospheric Research, this site features 3-D simulations of more than 40 phenomena clouds and precipitation, coral reef evolution (starting 21,000 years ago), universal fire shape, fire twirl and burst behavior, severe weather (tornadoes, thunderstorms, typhoons, etc.) and more. http://www.vets.ucar.edu/vg/categories/all.shtml

EDUCATIONAL SOCIAL MEDIA

Although online learning has been given credence in many forums and markets, some remain skeptical. The justification for the educational use of social media technologies will be discussed in this month’s column, with a focus on blogging. Now regularly referenced in mainstream media and in the culture generally, blogs are just one form of social media that have come into the public limelight in recent years.

Although internet news junkies and students may be familiar with blogs and blogging, many adults, especially educators, have been left out in the cold. Slyly making the point, the increasingly famous YouTube video, “Did you Know?” (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pMcfRLYDm2U), makes an excellent case for the need for educators and school districts to keep up with changes in technology in order to remain relevant for today’s 21st century students. (Incidentally, it is recommended that all educators watch the video and invite their administrators to do so as well.) Whether or not educators agree with high-speed changes in technology (and their impacts on human behavior and human society) is beside the point. By their very nature, effective educators must be able to relate to students. Therefore, educators must take advantage of current technologies in order to “meet students where they are at,” which today refers to the Internet.

Because of their popularity, blogs are an excellent place for educators to begin learning about social media technologies. For newcomers, blogs—formerly called weblogs—are simply journal-type entries that are available on the Internet. They are most often publicly available to all, but can also be limited to a select audience. Blogs are popular because they are engaging. They can also reverse the paradigm of a user adapting to the institution or the status quo. This is because the act of blogging allows students to co-create and transform their own learning experiences, which are closely related to theories of active-learning, inquiry-based learning and other constructivist pedagogies. Speaking specifically, blogs can be used: (1) as discussion boards, recording how students parse course content; (2) to easily and openly provide required or supplemental material in video, audio, or textual form; (3) to expose students to multiple perspectives and outside expertise; and, (4) for transparency. Students produce better products (and plagiarize less) when their work is available to the rest of the class. It is the Oxford model equivalent of “owning-up” to one’s work. In this way, blogs can eliminate the one-to-one, student-to-teacher network and make all learning class inclusive.

Taking the role of a futurist, it is reasonable to assume that all educators, regardless of their specializations, will eventually have to first be well-versed in educational technologies. Of course, the value of any technology depends upon its use. Since students will continue to use technologies, it is for the sake of their own profession and their students that skeptical teachers develop the basic skills necessary to use social media technologies to their advantage.

Next month’s column will focus on building the technological skills necessary for educators to become effective bloggers. In the meantime, what follows is a resource list that will help teachers understand the value of blogging in education:

(1) Blogs in Education http://edublogs.org/
(2) Top 100 Education Blogs http://oedb.org/library/features/top-100-education-blogs
(4) Teaching with Primary Sources at Cal U http://ctps.blogspot.com

For more information, please contact:
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