The TPS Newsletter will now be distributed electronically. This will reduce distribution and printing costs and better reflects the way people currently communicate. A TPS blog will be established to enhance communications between TPS staff and readers—see “SOCIAL MEDIA.” The TPS Newsletter’s new format is designed to be more user-friendly as the electronic links take readers directly to resources. We invite your comments about our newsletter and encourage your feedback. Please e-mail your comments/suggestions to berdar@calu.edu or call her at 724-938-6025.

ASK NIK

Good support programs fail all too often simply because people do not know they exist and therefore cannot take advantage of them. Luckily, we are never short of inquiries and feedback; however, many of our communiqués are of a one-to-one nature. The purpose of this new column is to enlarge the audience of our responses to questions that are sent in. Starting next month, this column will feature this advice. For the unfamiliar, whether you’re a teacher, education major, or professor, we encourage you to consider our department as your resource assistant for your primary source needs. Email inquiries to roberts_n@calu.edu.

LYNNE SAYS

The first month of school is tough for teachers to get their students acclimated back into school mode. Obeying classroom rules is just one obstacle that lasts all school year long. For educators interested in classroom structure, there is an online resource www.lessonplanspage.com/BackToSchool.html that offers some fun ways to teach children “Fun” classroom Do’s and Don’ts. When on that page scroll down to the “More Back to School Lessons and Teacher Resources” section. Under the “General” category you will find several links on creating your own classroom rules. And remember Ginott’s words: “Teachers are expected to reach unattainable goals with inadequate tools. The miracle is that sometimes they accomplish this impossible task” — Haim G. Ginott.

TPS SERVICES/UPCOMING EVENTS

Earn at least 18 Act 48 continuing education hours at no-cost. Cal U teacher professional development workshop—October 6, 13, 20, 27, 2009. This advanced workshop on conducting oral history interviews as class projects is open to teachers who have previously attended a TPS/ AAM workshop or institute. View the flyer and register online at: www.cup.edu/education/aam/tpsworkshop.jsp or contact Lynne Berdar for more details: 724-938-6025 or e-mail her at berdar@calu.edu. Nik Roberts will be available during the Fall 2009 and Spring 2010 semesters to meet with local teachers who plan to prepare students for participation in the 3rd annual Primary Source History Competition at Cal U. This event prepares students for entry into the regional National History Day Competition at the Senator John Heinz History Center in Pittsburgh, PA. The regional competition will take place from March 20-21, 2010. Interested teachers should contact Nik Roberts at 724-938-6022 or e-mail him at roberts_n@calu.edu.
SOCIAL MEDIA AND EDUCATION by NIK

As we discussed in past columns, one of the most useful—and most popular—forms of educational social media is the blog (or weblog). To accompany the new newsletter, TPS has a new departmental blog that will serve our K-12 and university communities. The blog features newsletter columns, departmental news, ACT 48 course offerings, educational opportunities, primary source art exhibits and monthly features, and online resources relevant to teaching and learning with primary sources. As a two-way communications medium, the blog openly accepts comments on each post. Please visit often and share your feedback with us: http://tpscalu.wordpress.com/

RESEARCH AND CURRENT THINKING

Inquiry-based Learning

Inquiry is naturally inherent to teaching with primary sources. These raw materials of history—original documents and objects which were created at the time under study—compel students to draw on their prior knowledge, personal experiences, and critical thinking skills to construct meaning. Teachers play an essential role in primary source-based inquiry learning by carefully selecting primary sources, encouraging and sustaining curiosity with probing questions, and modeling analysis and reflective practice. Connecting inquiry to learning is not a new form of instructional strategy or pedagogy. Countless educators and scholars, including Socrates, John Dewey, and Paulo Friere have advocated for what we now call inquiry-based learning. The TPS Quarterly newsletter offers more detail at http://www.loc.gov/teachers/tps/quarterly/index.html

CENTER FOR ORAL HISTORY

The Teaching with Primary Sources department has established a Center for Oral History (COH). The Center for Oral History mission is to promote the use of oral history in courses, preserve local history through recorded personal accounts, educate others about oral history techniques, and serve as the primary oral history resource center in southwestern Pennsylvania. The Center evolved out of the Veterans Oral Histories Project (VOHP), which collects and preserves firsthand accounts of local veterans who served in one or more of our nation's military branches. Those oral histories are being preserved at Manderino Library and the Library of Congress and are available at http://www.cup.edu/education/aam/index.jsp A second oral history collection relating to the 1948 Donora Smog incident captures six personal accounts of the tragedy, which was the impetus for the passage of national clean air laws. Locate those oral history interviews at http://tinyurl.com/caluddc

COMMUNITY AND CLASSROOM

Southwestern Pennsylvania is rich in history and teachers who use local history effectively in the classroom are able to help students make connections to the past as well as help them to understand and create historical contexts beyond the local area. Using Inquiry-based instructional strategies along with local history helps students to develop critical thinking skills and enables them to better understand how to make linkages between events and places. Teachers who are interested in learning more about the art of teaching with local history should contact Cal U’s Teaching with Primary Sources staff for guidance and professional development in that area.

For more information, please contact: Library of Congress Teaching with Primary Sources
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Phone: 724-938-6025 Fax: 724-938-6024 E-mail: roberts_n@calu.edu
www.calu.edu/education/aam
To receive the electronic newsletter via email, send a request to berdar@calu.edu.