



SIUE workshop encourages educators to integrate STEM into history lessons

by Megan Wieser

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EDWARDSVILLE - The Southern Illinois University Edwardsville Center for Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) Research, Education and Outreach is partnering with the Library of Congress Teaching with Primary Resources program at SIUE to offer a teacher workshop focused on the integration of STEM thinking in historical lessons.

The workshop was offered June 20-21 in Springfield and June 27-28 in SIUE's Lovejoy Library. Approximately 20 area teachers attended the workshop to gain inspiration for their lesson planning.

"STEM guides so much of what happens in the world," said Matt Johnson, instructional design and curriculum specialist with the SIUE STEM Center. "That is important to keep in mind when we're looking at history, just as history affects what happened in STEM advancement. We want to weaken the artificial barriers that exist between subjects such as history and STEM, so we can more fully understand them."

During the workshop, attending educators are practicing primary source analysis through mapping activities.

"A world map of 1562 is heavily influenced by the technology and science of the time, so it's important to consider that in order to fully understand the map, its purpose and where it came from," Johnson explained. "Looking at it with a STEM lens would include thinking about what its creators knew about the world and universe around them and how they must have made the map."

"STEM thinking is an evolving concept in education," added Amy Wilkinson, program manager of the Library of Congress Teaching with Primary Resources program at SIUE. "We want to encourage teachers to have students analyze maps for the historical context, while also contemplating it through a STEM lens. We want them to consider how we might view a map to better understand how STEM thinking involves the decisions and changes that happened at a particular time."

This professional development offering aligns with the University's values of citizenship and wisdom.

"We're happy to help teachers add to their toolbox of skills and resources any way we can," Johnson said. "By partnering with other groups on campus, we've been able to provide meaningful experiences to a wider audience than we might otherwise be able to reach."

The Teaching with Primary Sources Program at Southern Illinois University Edwardsville (TPS SIUE) is funded by a grant from the Library of Congress and is a member of the TPS Educational Consortium. Members of the TPS Educational Consortium assist in the design of the TPS program and offer TPS professional development on an ongoing basis, year-round. The mission of the Teaching with Primary Sources program is to build awareness of the Library's educational initiatives, provide content that promotes the effective educational use of the Library's resources, and offer access to and promote sustained use of the Library's educational resources.

The Library achieves this mission through collaborations between the Library and the K-12 educational community across the United States. The program contributes to the quality of education by assisting teachers in their use of the Library's digitized primary sources to engage students, develop their critical thinking skills and construct knowledge. Learn more about the Library's TPS program and other resources available to teachers at www.loc.gov/teachers.

The Southern Illinois University Edwardsville Center for STEM Research, Education and Outreach comprises an independent group of researchers and educators, innovating ways to engage students and the public in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM). Within the SIUE Graduate School, the Center brings together research faculty, graduate students and practitioners to conduct education research.

The Center contributes educational expertise to SIUE undergraduate classes and provides professional development for K-12 teachers. The Center boasts a significant library of equipment and resources, which are available for loan at no cost to campus and regional instructors. For more information, visit <https://www.siue.edu/stem/about.shtml> or contact STEM Center Director Sharon Locke at (618) 650-3065 or stemcenter@siue.edu.