

FROM THE EDITOR:

Each academic discipline engenders unique forms of communication—central concepts, core methods of inquiry, and specific habits of mind—that make discourse in the community possible. A discipline’s specific ways of knowing are communicated in the classroom through signature pedagogies. According to Lee Shulman, signature pedagogies provide “early socialization into the practices and values of a field” as disciplinary novices are taught “to *think*, to *perform*, and to *act with integrity*” to the discipline.¹ Historians who engage in the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning are compelled to consider how the decisions they make as teachers introduce students to the discipline’s ways of thinking and knowing; they must also reflect on the extent to which students have learned and are able to act upon these understandings.

Over the past forty years, *Teaching History: A Journal of Methods* has consistently contributed to scholarly conversations about teaching and learning in the discipline. Founded in 1975 by Stephen Kneeshaw, Loren Pennington, and Philip Reed Rulon and first published in 1976, *Teaching History’s* purpose has been to provide teachers at all levels with the best and newest ideas for their classrooms. I first encountered *Teaching History* in the mid-1990s. My father, a historian and history teacher educator, suggested I read the journal to learn from the experiences of historians who had decided to make teaching a central focus in their research and had therefore committed publically to enter conversations about history teaching at various levels. As a young teacher, I noticed immediately the authors’ seriousness of purpose, fidelity to the discipline, and their reflective stances with respect to student learning. This ever-present theme in *Teaching History* has been due to the work of its editor, Steve Kneeshaw. For forty years Steve provided a forum through which scholarly teachers could discuss and reflect upon their work.

In this current issue of *Teaching History*, the four contributors adhere to the standards set by the journal’s founders, and they continue in that vein. Jessamyn Neuhaus’s “Can We Counteract the September 11 Conspiracy Meme?” documents the challenges she has faced in the classroom in the midst of conspiracy theories regarding the September 11 terrorist attacks on the United States. Neuhaus relates her use of a documentary in a survey course and explains how she teaches students to think historically so they do not fall prey to the so-called “evidence” abundant in a digital world. Kevin Krahenbuhl outlines his work using mini-documentaries to engage students in the past and help them acknowledge the importance of relating specific events to larger historical themes when crafting narratives. He draws attention to possible uses of technology paired with the promotion of historical thinking competencies in survey courses. Kathryn McDaniel’s essay reminds us why history, as a way of thinking and knowing, helps humans understand their experiences in place and time. “Historical Thinking Builds Bridges” recognizes the importance of historical

¹Lee S. Shulman, “On Professions & Professionals,” *Daedalus* 134, 3 (Summer 2005), 52–59. Italics in original.

consciousness and the connection of the past to the present and the future. The teaching note by Russell Olwell, Mary-Elizabeth Murphy, and Pierre Rice draws attention to the importance of lived experiences when encountering the past. Their efforts to work in the community and ensure that all students have the opportunity to learn about the past by visiting particular sites prompt us to consider ways in which we might forge connections with our students in the larger context of public culture.

When Richard Hughes of Illinois State University and I assumed the roles of book review editor and editor, respectively, of *Teaching History* on January 1, 2016, we knew that while our names would appear on the front pages of the forty-first volume of the journal, this issue would truly represent the efforts of editor Steve Kneeshaw and book review editor David Dalton. Richard and I thank Steve and David for their work; the articles and book reviews herein represent their dedication to the journal.

While history teachers at all levels have the pleasure of interacting with students on a daily basis and rarely find themselves alone, teaching can often be isolating and lonely. It is crucial for history teachers—from elementary schools through universities—to have a community to which they can turn to share their triumphs and frustrations, to seek feedback and make recommendations, and to gain new insights and ask questions. Steve Kneeshaw and his colleagues created such a community when they founded *Teaching History*, and for forty years Steve dedicated his professional life to promoting scholarly conversations about the teaching and learning of history. With heartfelt thanks, respect, and admiration, I humbly strive to continue in that tradition.

Sarah Drake Brown
Ball State University
Editor, *Teaching History*