The *Echoes From The Wall* Teachers' Guide contains materials and student assignments to support two complementary approaches to teaching the history of the Vietnam War. The guide has six separate modules covering various aspects of that era. Each module, in turn, consists of two sections. The two sections can be used separately or in combination. Both approaches encourage students to use the supplementary materials located in the appendices of this Teachers' Guide and other resources, some of which may be found on this Web site.

You may use this guide in several ways:

- as stand-alone lessons to be taught in a traditional format of lecture, discussion, and student worksheets;

- as a basis for team learning in which teams of students teach their classmates about the Vietnam War era; and

- in customized combinations, teaching some lessons in a more traditional format and some lessons using team learning.

This guide is designed to give students many experiences:

- using primary source material to conduct historical research;

- exercising critical and reflective thinking;

- identifying and empathizing with the historical experience of others;

- developing group interaction skills;

- developing skills in leadership; and

- developing skills in citizenship and civic responsibility.

The lessons and activities in this guide are designed so that you can choose material to fit your schedule and your students' learning styles. You may elect to use some or all of the material in this guide. Some student preparation can be done as homework, and much of the material will culminate in classroom discussions. Throughout this guide you will find questions for student reflection. These observations can deepen student appreciation of the complexities of the Vietnam War era. Students should keep a learning log where they can contemplate the material they are studying and use their reflections as a basis for classroom discussion.

Leadership Matrix

Other Special Features

The use of learning logs

Learning logs are reflective journals kept by students. The purpose is to help students become more reflective in their study of history. They use the learning logs to record questions and observations they have as they conduct their studies of the Vietnam War era.

The use of teams and team learning structures

Team learning involves students teaching students. There are many advantages to team learning:

- allowing the class to cover more material in greater depth;

- creating structures for "deep learning" to occur (deep learning allows students to remember more because s/he was actively involved with classmates in their own learning);

- creating structures and processes that enhance teamwork and cooperation;

- creating opportunities for students to engage in whole brain learning, satisfying many different learning styles;

- creating interdependency and cooperation among all students;

- fostering respect for the diverse talents of all classmates;

- teaching the importance of responsibility to one's peers; and

- fostering creativity.

A peer evaluation worksheet can be found here.

The use of primary resources to study the history of the Vietnam War

This guide contains many activities that encourage students to use primary resources to learn about the Vietnam War era including films, interviews with veterans and protesters, letters from veterans, high school yearbooks, and official documents from the United States and North Vietnamese governments. Inviting participants in the war to your classroom is a particularly effective technique. Module 3, appendix A gives helpful suggestions on "inviting Vietnam veterans to share their oral histories with your students."

The lessons in this guide are designed to contribute to the citizenship and leadership education of the students who undertake them by:

- building respect for plurality and diversity;

- providing opportunities to practice civil and considerate interaction with others; and

- providing experiences that engage students' empathy and perspective taking.

Using Team Learning to Teach Young Historians about the Vietnam War Era

Team learning has many advantages:

- students learn from each other;

- students are more likely to remember what they learn for a longer period of time;

- multiethnic and gender cooperation and understanding is increased; and

- competition is decreased.

Team learning is structured to enable students to work together toward a common goal, enhancing each other's learning along the way. Because of the emphasis on teamwork and responsibility to one's teammates, team learning builds shared leadership and community accountability.

Students sometimes cover more material working in teams. Each team will engage in research inside and outside the classroom. They are responsible for exploring an issue and sharing their findings with the entire class. Often the sharing can be accomplished using inventive forms such as panels or video reports or by creating their own websites. Students research a topic, pool their research with that of their teammates, and creatively share their findings with the entire class. Thus, each student is responsible for teaching a part of the lesson to the entire class.

Hints for Building Effective Learning Teams

- Set aside time for teams to have their initial meetings. Team members should all know the objectives of the assignment, the product they must create, and the standards for evaluation of their work.

- Stress the importance of making certain everybody is involved in the project.

- Urge team members to identify the skills, talents, and interests they bring to the team.

- At the end of each team meeting, team members should come to a common understanding of the tasks, individual responsibilities, team member's contributions, crucial time lines, deliverables, and due dates.

Team members should decide on a set of "norms" or ways they agree to work together. You may wish to sit in on the initial team meetings and help members craft behaviorally specific norms (e.g., show respect for my teammates by following through on any task I have promised, not laugh at any idea).

Some Tools For Team Leading

Brainstorming
What is brainstorming?
Brainstorming is a process in which team members contribute ideas they have on a specific subject.

What is the purpose of brainstorming?
The purpose of brainstorming is to create a nonjudgmental climate in which to generate many related ideas.

What is the process?
Team members respond to a question or topic by calling out all ideas that come to them. Someone records the ideas. The rules for brainstorming include:

- no idea is too silly to put forward;

- do not judge, discuss, or make comments on any of the ideas until the brainstorming session is over;

- keep the momentum up by keeping the ideas flowing; and

- designate someone to write down all the ideas during the session.

After the brainstorming session is over, the group can discuss the ideas and come up with criteria for selection.

Rounds

What is a round?
A round is the practice of going around the group to assure that every person has an opportunity to contribute to the discussion.

What is the purpose of rounds?
The purpose of rounds is to make certain that every person has an opportunity to speak about a given topic. Rounds are useful because they prevent the group from assuming that everyone holds the same view about an issue.

Rounds are used to:

- check out people's understanding of a discussion that has just occurred;

- encourage participation from less talkative team members; and

- prevent automatic assumptions that the entire group agrees with the viewpoints of the more verbal members of the group.

What is the process?
The team should make certain to go around the table and have each person speak on the issue.

Appreciative inquiry technique

What is the appreciative inquiry technique?
The appreciative inquiry technique is a series of focused rounds that help team members share information about what each member appreciated most about a meeting and what would add to members' appreciation at following meetings.

What is the purpose of the appreciative inquiry technique?
Appreciative inquiry provides a constructive process for gathering data about individual perceptions of how a group is functioning and ways to improve team processes. Appreciative inquiry is usually done at the close of a meeting so the group can obtain information about what worked well in a meeting and what could be improved at future meetings.

What is the process?
Appreciative inquiry is conducted in a series of two rounds. During the first round, each team member cites one thing s/he most appreciated about the meeting. During the second round, each team member cites one thing that would have added to his/her appreciation.

Straw poll decision making

What is straw poll decision making?
A straw poll is a tool used by teams to keep the consensus process moving forward.

What is the purpose of straw poll decision making?
This tool helps speed up the consensus process by helping a team separate issues they agree upon from ones they still must work on to reach consensus.

What is the process?
After the group has discussed the issue, the facilitator conducts a straw poll by asking each member to hold up fingers to indicate the range of their consensus.

You should then proceed accordingly:

- If all fingers are up, a decision has been reached.

- If some fingers are down, find out what would have to be changed to reach consensus.

- If some fingers are sideways, initiate discussion to answer the concerns.

- If one finger is up, that indicates a qualified yes to the decision.

- If all fingers are down, the decision is unacceptable.

- If all fingers are sideways, further discussion is needed.

Evaluating Student Participation in Team Learning

Teachers may find it difficult to accurately assess grades in a team situation. Here are some techniques you may use to evaluate student's work and make certain students do their fair share of work during a project.

1. Create learning contracts with each student team. A learning contract is an agreement between team members and the teacher. The student team members contract with the teacher for a grade. The contract should include the following items:

- A description of the project the students will undertake;

- A list of products that the team will provide as tangible evidence that the project is completed (e.g., our team will produce a fifteen-minute video on the U.S. POW experience in Vietnam); and

- The students' criteria for success, for example:

  - *We believe criteria for an "A" grade include*s:

- consulting six primary sources;

- explaining what POWs experienced on a daily basis;

- making the experience come alive for our classmates;

- explaining what North Vietnam thought of American POWs; and

- consulting international treaties specifying how POWs were to be treated.

2. Help students create ground rules for team behavior and shared responsibility.

- Ground rules describe how the team will work together and what the team thinks "working together well" looks like (e.g., we will attend all meetings and complete team assignments at agreed upon deadlines).

- Discuss the concept of "social loafing" with your students. Social loafing occurs when some team members shoulder the load for the team, and other team members do not do any work.

- Ask the teams how they will deal with social loafing.

- Serve as a consultant to all teams, and be available for students to discuss and solve team problems.

3. Require each team to keep a written record of team meetings. The record should document all team decisions and work assignments.

4. Have team members grade each other for teamwork and shared participation. Factor these grades into the team's final grade.