The theme for this issue of SOCIAL STUDIES AND THE YOUNG LEARNER is “Core Content.” The elementary years are when students acquire fundamental skills and basic content knowledge in the various social studies disciplines, including history, geography, and civics.

In the first article, “Building ‘Character’ into Education: A Partnership Takes Place,” Maria Sudeck describes how a “citizenship council of school staff and parents” selected character traits to emphasize in the classroom, and then how teachers linked these traits to ongoing curriculum and activities. Members of the council continue to meet in order to “regroup, refine, and assess” their efforts.

In the second article, “Paraguay: A Case Study of a Developing Nation,” Cynthia Szymanski Sunal, Angel Daniel Aquino, and T. Gail Pritchard show how cooperative student groups can benefit from studying not a large or economically powerful nation, but a developing nation in Latin America that “is representative of many of the world’s nations: partly modern and partly traditional....”

In the third article, “Using Biographies to Explore Social Justice in U.S. History,” Gary Fertig describes how students can “learn United States history while using the language arts—reading, writing, speaking, and drama—to investigate the lives and times of Americans who stood up for their rights.”

In the fourth article, “Amazing Inventions and Marvelous Products: History, Economics, and Writing,” Robert W. Maloy, Sharon A. Edwards, and Ruth-Ellen Verock-O’Loughlin describe three activities that teachers can use to initiate investigations in history and economics and to strengthen students’ writing skills with the use of students’ imaginary “inventions” and “products.”

In the fifth article, “Maps as Stories about the World,” Avner Segall points out that “While we tend to think of a map as a neutral depiction of the real world, it is a record that selects, delimits, and inventories only a part of it.”

The pullout, “Classroom Activities for Diversity,” by Omiunota Nelly Okpokodu presents three activities (for various grade levels) that accommodate different types of learning and that address cultural diversity in student populations.

In the children’s literature section, “Confronting the Stereotypes of Appalachia through Children’s Literature,” Kay A. Chick states that “Mountain People” may be the last group in America that it is “acceptable to ridicule.” How can teachers, she asks, “help children develop a positive view of Appalachia and challenge the stereotypes of that region?”

In the perspectives piece, “Meeting the Needs of Diverse Learners,” Omiunota Nelly Okpokodu says that classrooms should create “settings that reflect the diversity of the greater society.”

**editor’s notes**

Dr. Sherry L. Field

Published by National Council for the Social Studies, 855 Sixteenth Street, Suite 500, Silver Spring, Maryland 20910, (301) 588-1800.

Editorial correspondence and manuscripts should be addressed to Sherry L. Field, University of Texas-Austin Department of Curriculum and Instruction 428 SZB, D5700 Austin, TX 78712-1294. Direct correspondence about advertising and copyright permissions to the NCSS Headquarters Office. Electronic mail may be sent to ssyl@ncss.org.

Social Studies and the Young Learner (ISSN 1056-0300) does not accept responsibility for the views expressed by its contributors. It provides opportunities for publishing materials reflecting divergent ideas, judgment, and opinions. Postage paid at Washington, D.C. and other mailing offices. Published four times a year: September/October, November/December, January/February, and March/April. Copyright ©2003 National Council for the Social Studies. The NCSS logotype is a trademark of National Council for the Social Studies.

As a member benefit, NCSS members may choose either a full subscription to Social Education or a full subscription to Social Studies and the Young Learner and the September and May/June issues of Social Education. Members who choose Social Education as their principal benefit may also subscribe to Social Studies and the Young Learner for only $20.00 extra. For non-members, the annual subscription rate for Social Studies and the Young Learner is $37.00. Individual copies of Social Studies and the Young Learner are $7.50 plus shipping and handling. Send check, payable to NCSS, to P.O. Box 79078, Baltimore, MD 21279-0078; or call 1 800 683-0812.

Social Studies and the Young Learner is indexed and annotated by ERIC/ChESS in Current Index to Journals in Education. Copies of articles are available from the Bell and Howell Information and Learning, 300 North Zeeb Road, Box 91, Ann Arbor, MI 48106.