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editor's notes



Dr. Sherry L. Field

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 Ukpokodu says that classrooms should create “settings that reflect the diversity of the greater society.”