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editor's notes



Dr. Sherry L. Field
editor



Dr. Phillip J. VanFossen
guest editor

The Internet has been described as the most valuable of the many computer technologies available to teachers and students.¹ Despite increasing classroom access to the Internet, however, the majority of K-5 teachers do not employ the Internet in their teaching, and this is especially so when they are teaching social studies.² Why aren't more K-5 teachers integrating this powerful medium into their teaching? This issue of *Social Studies and the Young Learner* provides suggestions and strategies for how and when to use the Internet to facilitate social studies learning in elementary classrooms.

Some of the greatest concerns raised by teachers about the Internet have to do with safety and inappropriate use. Michael and Ilene Berson address these concerns and provide suggestions for fostering appropriate on-line interactions in "Developing Thoughtful 'Cybercitizens.'"

In "Critical Thinking and Visiting Websites: It Must Be Elementary!" James M. Shiveley discusses this same issue from a social studies perspective by identifying helpful criteria and creating rubrics that teachers and students can use when evaluating the content of a website.

A second concern expressed by teachers is the time needed to find and integrate quality web-based material into their teaching. One solution to this is to use existing online curriculum as recommended by Phillip VanFossen in "Using WebQuests to Scaffold Higher-Order Thinking."

In "The Well-Constructed WebQuest," Shelly Kennedy describes how the WebQuest model might be used to support a creative environment in a 5th grade classroom.

The Pullout section is devoted to "Oral History Projects in the Elementary Social Studies Classroom," written by Kathryn Walbert. The editors are at work reviving the once-popular *How To Do It* series, and this pullout is the first in the new series.

The Internet has many uses even before the teacher enters the classroom. In the Children's Literature section, Laura Meyers documents her use of the Internet to locate and review quality children's literature that is useful for teaching social studies concepts and content. "Surfing a Wave of Good Books" also provides descriptions of on-line databases of notable children's literature.

Under Teaching Resources, James Sheehan and James M. Shiveley offer "The *Brown v. Board of Education* Decision: Resources for Grades 4 and 5." This piece provides Internet sites, resources, and lesson activities that can be used to study this seminal case and to celebrate its 50th anniversary.

Nadine Roush describes how satellite television, Internet-based resources, and conference calls combine to provide a "virtual fieldtrip" for her 5th grade students. In "Colonial Williamsburg Electronic Field Trips," she outlines how her class has used this specific online product and provides suggestions about how to get the most out of it.

Finally, Mary Francis Erler describes how "Exploring Culture with Music" can draw teachers together for interdisciplinary fun and learning using music and art from native cultures in the Americas and around the world. 🌐

PHILLIP J. VANFOSSEN, Guest Editor
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Notes

1. Henry J. Becker, *Internet Use By Teachers: Conditions of Professional Use and Student-Directed Use* (Irvine, CA: Center For Research On Information Technology And Organizations, 1999): 32, www.crito.uci.edu/TLC/findings/InternetUse/startpage.htm.
2. Phillip J. VanFossen, "Reading and Math Take Up So Much of the Time...: An Overview of Social Studies Instruction in Elementary Classrooms in Indiana." Paper presented at the College and University Faculty Assembly of the National Council for Social Studies, Chicago, IL, November 12, 2003. While 95 percent of K-5 teachers who responded reported Internet access in their classroom (65.5 percent had a "fast, reliable connection") and more than half reported participating in multiple training sessions, 51.3 percent had never used the Internet in social studies instruction, with an additional 25 percent indicating they used it "only rarely."