



This issue of *Social Education* offers a rich set of articles on important topics for social studies teachers that range from engaging students in historical inquiry to promoting equity in the classroom and celebrating the mission of social studies education to prepare students for active democratic citizenship.

There has recently been a proliferation of online lesson plans for teachers on educational marketplaces and other sites. The authors of our opening article express concerns about the quality of many of these resources. Lauren McArthur Harris, Leanna Archambault and Catharyn Shelton suggest criteria that teachers should use when adapting online historical lesson plans or creating their own lessons, and point out that one consistent problem with online resources is their lack of sourcing information.

Global education is an essential part of social studies, but the wide range of possible topics can make it difficult to teach global studies courses in the time that is available. For teachers seeking a focus for their class activities, Melissa Mitchem and William Gaudelli recommend lessons based on the United Nations Development Goals for 2015–2030, and suggest learning activities and suitable resources that will enable students to understand the goals and conduct research on the means of achieving them.

Michael M. Yell quotes the advice of Kurt Lewin that “nothing is so practical as a good theory” (274), and emphasizes the value of the principles of cooperative learning for the social studies classroom. He identifies the models that he has found most effective for engaging classes in the study of history during his teaching career, and offers recommendations for dealing with the complex challenges of planning and accomplishing in-depth classroom conversations among students.

Identifying the distinctive talents of each student in a class can offer a strong basis for developing their knowledge and analytical skills. Evra M. Baldinger, AJ Johnstone, and Erin Palmer critique conventional ideas of academic excellence because they often “privilege ‘academic’ language and ways of talking and being that are most accessible to White and middle-class students” (281). They maintain that “each of our students expresses brilliance in richly varied ways, but that this brilliance is systematically ignored” (280). Their article identifies the classroom barriers that might prevent students from displaying their brilliance and suggest strategies for maximizing the potential of each student.

To help students to develop their writing skills, Philip Robertson recommends assignments in which they craft op-ed articles. These allow students to voice their thoughts and inner concerns about a variety of topics, and enable classes to “incorporate a wider range of perspectives on issues” (282). He describes how the construction of op-eds helped his students

in an inner-city school in Phoenix to develop a stronger sense of civic agency as they explored the civil rights movement.

In its upcoming term, the Supreme Court will review important cases dealing with abortion access, the Second Amendment, and the death penalty. In our Lessons on the Law column, Catherine Hawke examines these cases, reviews decisions made by the Court during its last term on issues involving the First and Fourth Amendments, and evaluates the likely future direction of a court whose makeup changed significantly during the Trump administration.

Eyewitness accounts of major events can be a great starting point for historical investigations. In this issue’s Sources and Strategies column, Lee Ann Potter presents a compelling primary source on the Great Fire of Chicago in 1871—an interview with a country peddler, Hyman Bernstein, who lived in Chicago at the time of the fire—and offers suggestions for examining his recollections of the fire and people’s responses to it. The interview was conducted in the 1930’s by a writer working for the Works Progress Administration (WPA) of the New Deal and is part of a fascinating collection of life stories of Americans who lived at the turn of the century that was compiled by the WPA. Available online at the Library of Congress, the collection offers a stimulating set of sources on U.S. history.

Conducting a historical inquiry that is based on primary sources can be a complex task for students, and our column on Teaching the C3 Framework points out that it “requires providing learners with specific scaffolds and explicit strategy instruction” (301). Stephanie van Hover, David Hicks, Colleen Fitzpatrick, and Melissa Lisanti recommend using the C3 Framework Inquiry Design Model in conjunction with the scaffold provided by SCIM-C (Summarizing, Contextualizing, Inferring, Monitoring, and Corroboration), which is especially useful in enabling students to examine a historical source and weigh its value for making evidence-based claims.

In a continuation of their series of articles commemorating the Centennial of NCSS, which was founded in 1921, Jeremiah Clabough and Rozella G. Clyde examine the longstanding NCSS mission of promoting civic education. They note that “being a democratic citizen is not a passive process” (306), and that “social studies classrooms are the preparation grounds for future generations of democratic citizens” (309). Their article identifies important NCSS publications and initiatives that have suggested the best teaching practices for engaging students in the examination of important contemporary topics, and developing evidence-based positions on public policy issues.

As always, the editors of *Social Education* welcome the comments of readers on any of the contributions to this issue at socialed@ncss.org.