

## Editor's Notebook

As we look forward to a refreshing summer and the luxury of time to plan for the next school year, the contents of this issue of *Social Education* will help us to make the most of the season. The contributors present ways of engaging students actively in asking the right questions, conducting research, developing interpretations, and communicating conclusions. Many of the creative teaching suggestions highlight the use of literature and the arts in the social studies classroom.

An excellent way to combine the study of history, geography, and literature into a powerful interdisciplinary unit is to examine literary maps of different states, which are widely available. In our Sources and Strategies column, Kathleen McGuigan introduces the colorful and varied literary maps on the Library of Congress website, and suggests ways of using them to teach about authors, places, and historical events in different states and regions of the country.

In some circumstances, teaching about the constitutions of different countries could be a tedious endeavor, but our Lessons on the Law column shows how students can become really engaged by envisaging themselves in the roles of framers of a constitution. Drawing on the experiences of the Comparative Constitutions Project, Jessie Baugher, Zachary Elkins, and Tom Ginsburg show how constitutions reflect the priorities of different countries, and how a comparison of international constitutions can help students to better understand the U.S. Constitution, which is short compared to many others but also considered by some scholars to be “the most difficult to amend in the world.” (128)

An increasing number of teachers are conducting inquiries based on the College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework, but the pressure of time can make it difficult to implement full-scale C3 Inquiry Design Model (IDM) blueprints. The lead writers of the C3 Framework—Kathy Swan, John Lee, and S.G. Grant—address this problem in our Teaching the C3 Framework column, and suggest the use of focused inquiries with fewer supporting questions, sources, and performance tasks. As an example, they present a focused inquiry into the effects on the United States of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941.

Two articles deal with different historical dimensions of slavery. Luis Martínez-Fernández contrasts the Spanish and U.S. systems of slavery, and introduces primary sources that focus on the different Spanish and U.S. attitudes to marriage among slaves. Although U.S. slaveowners viewed slaves as chattels and prohibited slave marriages, the Spanish government regarded marriage among slaves in its New World colonies as a means of stabilizing and maintaining the system of slavery. The author suggests document-based questions for class discussion.

George Washington and other Founding Fathers were slave owners, and Ebony Elizabeth Thomas, James Joshua Coleman, and Lindsay R. Cicchino maintain that children's literature often presents a flawed

picture of this aspect of their lives, and that “few biographies about George Washington for young readers raise concerns about his position on slavery.” (144) This is problematic because students often carry impressions of historical leaders that they acquired in elementary school into their studies at higher grade levels. The authors suggest ways of addressing this issue.

Hiroshi Kitamura and Jeremy Stoddard strongly recommend the use of films and graphic novels to introduce students to the history of the creation of the atom bomb, the effects of its use against Japan in World War II, and the perils of the nuclear arms race in the decades that followed. At a time when “nuclear issues demand greater attention in the classroom,” (154) the authors suggest resources and discussion topics.

At the center of this issue is the colorful annual pullout that lists and annotates this year's *Notable Social Studies Trade Books for Young People*. A committee of NCSS members, working in cooperation with the Children's Book Council, designated more than 130 books published in 2017 as Notable Trade Books because of their value for social studies education and their high literary quality. The selected books include both fiction and non-fiction, cover the range of social studies disciplines, and can help to implement the national social studies standards.

Students have recently engaged in much publicized civic action against gun violence. Andrea S. Libresco emphasizes the value of children's literature that deals with civic action of many kinds by young activists whose age is close to that of the student readers. In her Elementary Education column, she reviews two recent Notable Social Studies Trade Books that focus on young activists. She suggests discussion questions that introduce students to the importance of civic awareness and civic action.

This issue contains reviews of the latest books to have won the NCSS annual Carter G. Woodson awards. These books, which are selected by a committee of NCSS members, are non-fiction publications for young people that focus on race and ethnicity in the United States. The themes of the latest award-winning books, which were published in 2017, include the struggle for African American rights in both the Civil War period and the 1960s; the story of Arturo Schomburg, whose library gave people of color their rightful place in history; and the epic legal struggle of Fred Korematsu against the Japanese American internment during World War II.

This edition of *Social Education* concludes with the publication of two recent NCSS position statements and resolutions passed by the NCSS House of Delegates at the annual meeting in San Francisco last November.

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