

To Get It Right, Read and Write!



Linda Bennett, Editor

“Reading, Writing, and Understanding” is the theme of this issue of *Social Studies and the Young Learner*.

In the first article, “To Understand the Content, Write About It!” Diana Leddy describes some of the methods used by members of the Vermont Writing Collaborative, which began as a study group of five teachers and now includes more than 100. “Our students,” writes Diana, “have taught us everything we know about understanding and writing.”

Shanan Fitts and Lisa A. Gross explain how a multimedia poetry project helps students develop language and communication skills and explore the meaning of culture, cultural diversity, and identity. Their article is titled, “I am from Delicious Lasagna: Exploring Cultural Identity with Digital Storytelling.”

In “Story Quilts: Communicating Content and Creating Connections,” co-authors Brian Sevier, Allison Sampish, Maria Barnes, and Katie Webb tell how teachers at different grade levels can use quilting projects to teach historical content as well as build bridges to members of the local community.

In his article “Student-Designed Cultural Lesson Boards and Wall Maps,” Charles R. Beck describes some techniques for encouraging students to create social studies displays that can serve as useful instructional materials for themselves and their classmates.”

In the center Pullout, Lewis Asimeng-Boahene and Barbara A. Marinak encourage students to contemplate the meaning of stories that have served as

moral guideposts for many generations. Their paper is “Well-Chosen Words: Thinking Critically About African Proverbs.”

In the article “Creating Connections: Integrating the Visual Arts with Social Studies,” Joyce H. Burstein and Greg Knotts illustrate examples (at two grade levels) of how art can be integrated with social studies to make learning relevant and interactive.

Freshwater crawfish are interesting creatures and also an important source of income for many who live in Louisiana. In his article “Mud Bugs: Supply, Demand, and Natural Resources in Louisiana,” Paul Nagel describes how a third grade teacher illustrates economic concepts with examples of local businesses and natural resources.

Erica M. Christie and Sarah E. Montgomery take a fresh look at a national holiday in “Beyond Pilgrim Hats and Turkey Hands: Using Thanksgiving to Promote Citizenship and Activism.” Rather than avoiding controversy (or surrendering to stereotypes), teachers can help students investigate cultural and historical perspectives.

Finally, Charles E. Jenks promotes “Using Oral History in the Elementary School Classroom” as a way to bring history to life, and to bring the community into the classroom.

Let’s make use of all the resources that our schools and communities offer to young people, and then encourage our students to write and speak about what they have learned! 🌐