

As this issue of *Social Education* was going to press, the COVID-19 pandemic forced a widespread shutdown of schools across the nation. NCSS is committed to supporting social studies educators during this difficult period. We urge our readers to visit the NCSS web page at www.socialstudies.org/ncss-covid19-resources for the latest information on the impact of the pandemic and for suitable resources to use for virtual learning.

This issue of *Social Education* offers features on historic milestones and major contemporary issues. Our authors provide lively insights and a host of useful teaching suggestions and engaging online resources.

In the opening article, Kenneth C. Davis discusses the “Great Contradiction” between the ideals of liberty of the American Revolution and the reality that slavery played a central role that “rocked the cradle of American history” (76). He urges a new framework for teaching about slavery that focuses on five central points, starting with the early days of the Atlantic slave trade and culminating with the failure of the abolition of slavery to end the continuing “stark divisions that plague the United States” (81).

This year marks the 250th anniversary of the Boston Massacre, and the subsequent trial of British soldiers who were accused of the massacre and defended by John Adams in court. Kate Elizabeth Brown's Lessons on the Law column discusses two innovations in common law practice that were evident in that trial—the offer of legal representation to defendants and the establishment of the standard that the prosecution has the burden of establishing proof beyond “reasonable doubt.”

In a major contribution to online learning, the Library of Congress has digitized millions of items in its collections. These include a rich collection of cartoons that can be used to teach history. In our Sources and Strategies column, Jen Reidel shows how teachers can examine the challenges of the Progressive era through the cartoons of Frederick Burr Opper, which depicted the power and influence of trusts that merged rival companies and eliminated competition.

Turning to the modern economy, Jane Ihrig and Scott Wolla review the new tools that the Federal Reserve has developed to fulfill its mandate of promoting maximal sustainable employment and price stability. The current framework of Fed policy, they point out, is “very different from the one described in many textbooks and curricula,” (93) because the Fed has introduced new tools as a means of influencing interest rates, and the widely expressed view that open market operations are its most widely used tool of monetary policy is now outdated.

In the Teaching the C3 Framework column, Kathy Swan, Ryan Crowley, and Gerry Swan describe how they have addressed the challenges of training student teachers in inquiry-based curriculum and instruction. One problem has been that many of these preservice teachers did not experience inquiry learning as students, because they received traditional instruction based on lectures and textbooks. The authors introduce the Questions-Tasks-Sources (QTS) Observation Protocol that they have developed as a useful tool for evaluating the

effectiveness of the inquiry-based instruction offered by the preservice teachers in their student teaching placements.

This issue features a special section contributed by our technology department editors, Michael J. Berson and Meghan McGlinn Manfra, that focuses on technological developments and challenges that affect social studies education.

In the first article of the section, Michael J. Berson and Ilene R. Berson highlight the problem that “our digital archives are fragile” (110) because digital records are vulnerable to deletion, alteration, and storage problems. They urge special efforts to ensure the accurate preservation of our historical records and cultural heritage.

Daniel G. Krutka expresses concern at the negative effects of social media, pointing out that big tech companies have introduced disruptive technologies that can have harmful consequences. He shows how social media have intruded on our personal privacy and have also transmitted misinformation that is divisive and damages the quality of our democracy. His article suggests inquiries based on the C3 Framework that will enable students to analyze the issues arising from the current practices of social media companies (especially Facebook) and to identify options for resolving these problems.

Meghan McGlinn Manfra highlights one of the major virtues of digital history: in contrast to traditional methods of teaching history, “digital history projects invite inquiry rather than provide a succinct narrative of the historic past.” (121) She recommends specific digital projects and resources that focus on topics that are especially engaging to students.

Students respond well to technological challenges. Elizabeth Walsh Moorman describes a project in which students used online databases and websites to investigate historic topics, and shared documents and graphics with each other on a digital bulletin board. They then constructed individual video essays that built arguments about important historical topics. Using examples from a group of students who investigated the Japanese internment during World War II, Moorman demonstrates how the project developed students' historical thinking skills.

In the Research and Practice column that concludes this issue, Tsafir Goldberg raises the question whether teachers are evading or embracing difficult histories. Interestingly, there is strong evidence that teachers today are increasingly enthusiastic about teaching difficult histories, in spite of the problems of doing so. He offers guidelines for best practices and points out the pitfalls that teachers should avoid.

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