

The contributors to this issue offer a rich assortment of articles dealing with significant past and present issues. They introduce our readers to fascinating primary sources and creative teaching ideas, and emphasize the importance of a first-rate social studies education for preparing students to be active citizens of our democracy.

In the United States today, Kenneth C. Davis points out, “book bans and the suppression of reading have been weaponized in the country’s volatile partisan conflicts” (11). He offers a historical perspective on the current efforts to ban books dealing with sexuality, race, and gender from school and public libraries, noting that those who advocate book bans fear facts, reality, and the loss of control over the way people think. The future of our democracy depends on the successful assertion of the rights to publish and read freely.

Our Research and Practice column addresses the challenge of developing students’ skills in civic discourse about divisive and controversial issues. Joseph Kahne and Carlos E. Cortés suggest that educators should focus students’ attention on an aspirational question: “How *should* we, as a community, speak to one another, particularly when it comes to contentious issues?” (17) Examining this question enables students to evaluate First Amendment rights and address the problem of the rise of “digital mobs” in social media in a way that will foster robust discussions rather than shouting matches when they discuss current issues.

Jenni Conrad and Jennifer Gallagher emphasize the importance of critical inquiry for the promotion of social justice in their examination of the challenge of designing effective questions for inquiries. Their Teaching the C3 Framework column offers a four-step process for brainstorming, analyzing, and revising compelling and supporting questions with a view to increasing students’ understanding of a problem and encouraging them to take informed action about it. The authors present a sample

inquiry into past and present anti-Asian racism in the United States.

In our Sources and Strategies column, Stephen Wesson examines a landmark event in the struggle for civil rights in the 1960s—the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom of August 1963, which brought a quarter of a million participants to the nation’s capital. He introduces an important primary source for studying this event—a leaflet outlining the final plans for the march that is accessible online in the Library of Congress’s collections. Wesson demonstrates how teachers can use this resource to enhance students’ understanding of the individuals and organizations supporting the march, and to evaluate its historical impact.

Article V of the U.S. Constitution provides for two methods of proposing constitutional amendments. One is for Congress to initiate the amendments and the other is for two thirds of state legislatures to request a constitutional convention to propose amendments. Although Richard J. Hardy points out that “thus far, every constitutional amendment has been initiated by the Congress,” (38) his Lessons on the Law column investigates the possibility of calling a constitutional convention to deal with seemingly intractable issues, such as immigration. Hardy reviews a number of significant, though unsuccessful historical attempts to call a constitutional convention, as well as some contemporary initiatives, which include an attempt to reverse the Supreme Court’s *Citizens United* decision, an effort to rein in the powers of the federal government, and an initiative to set term limits for Congress.

Blockbusting was a racially discriminatory practice employed in the mid-twentieth century by real estate agents who purchased houses cheaply by telling white homeowners that Black families were about to move into the neighborhood and impact the area’s property values. The agents then sold the houses at high prices to Black families. Tina M. Ellsworth, Scott M. Waring, and Jason K. Beavers offer important

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background information and a lesson plan on blockbusting using a powerful primary source—an anti-blockbusting pamphlet issued by the Kansas City Department of Human Relations and distributed in the 1960's. The authors show how students can use the SOURCES Framework for Teaching with Primary and Secondary Sources to analyze the document in ways that expand their historical knowledge and facilitate independent, inquiry-based research.

In the face of pressures to marginalize social studies in the school curriculum, it is more important than ever to engage in advocacy for social studies subjects. Seth Brady and Randy Smith offer many useful tips on successful advocacy in their description of a campaign by educators that persuaded the Illinois legislature to establish a Global Scholar Certificate for high school students who demonstrate global competency. In addition to taking relevant courses, students who qualify for the certificate engage in transformative activities that include globally-focused service learning, dialogue, and a project that requires students to conduct research on a global problem with the aim of contributing to its solution.

NCSS has played a key role in the promotion of global education in this country. Graham Pike examines the contributions of some of its pioneers in his review of *The Global Education Movement: Narratives of Distinguished Scholars*, edited by Toni Fuss Kirkwood-Tucker, which focuses on the experiences and accomplishments of 13 winners of the Distinguished Global Scholar award given by the NCSS International Assembly. The book offers informative and absorbing accounts of the personal journeys and professional influences that led to these scholars becoming trailblazers in the global educational field.

This issue opens with the address delivered by NCSS President Shannon Pugh at the 102nd NCSS annual conference in Philadelphia in December 2022—the first in-person NCSS annual conference in three years. At a time

when social studies education is under attack, she shares her responses to many of the questions and criticisms that are leveled at educators, and urges a calm, firm, and consistent defense of our disciplines. She emphasizes that “without a comprehensive program of social studies for all students, we are putting our very democracy at risk” (8).

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



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