

Editor's Notebook

One of the principal missions of social studies is to teach students the knowledge and skills needed to investigate and evaluate major issues. This edition of *Social Education* abounds with articles dealing with major issues, and includes a special section on a recently released document that marks a turning point in inquiry-based social studies—the C3 Framework for Social Studies State Standards.

In our Sources and Strategies column, Stephen Wesson and Cheryl Lederle use the photographs of Lewis Hine from the Library of Congress collection to introduce students to the heated debate in the first part of the twentieth century about child labor. The Congress.gov website can be used to track the progress of legislation from the point of its introduction to the point of becoming law. The authors demonstrate how to use the website to track the progress of the 1916 Keating-Owen bill, which severely restricted interstate trade with businesses that used child labor. Even though the bill was eventually struck down by the Supreme Court, it paved the way for the future abolition of child labor. This historic controversy poignantly illustrates the passionate efforts of reformers who tried to abolish child labor, and the institutional and political obstacles to their success.

In an article on a major contemporary issue, Robert W. Bailey and Bárbara C. Cruz investigate the challenge of teaching about gay rights in the social studies classroom. They recommend approaching the topic by examining important legal cases related to gay rights and civil rights. This approach enables students to become more familiar with the decisions of the courts (which the authors describe as the least understood of the three branches of government) and also to understand and evaluate the arguments of proponents and opponents of gay civil rights.

Catherine Hawke forecasts a “blockbuster term” in her review of upcoming Supreme Court cases for our Looking at the Law column. In the 2013–2014 term, the Court’s agenda includes cases on campaign finance, affirmative action, the Fair Housing Act, the right of public protest, and the search of cell phones of arrested individuals, any of which could result in landmark rulings. The column reviews these and other cases that are of great potential interest to teachers of law-related subjects.

Religious bigotry is a major problem in the contemporary world, and Charles C. Haynes points out that teachers face the challenge of “teaching students how to engage people of different religions and cultures with civility and respect.” (307) He introduces Face to Faith, a program offered free to schools by the Tony Blair Faith Foundation, which enables students to use videoconferences to connect with students in schools in other countries who often have different religions from their own.

Students of history, Dave Neumann reminds us, “are never blank slates, and they have often formed impressions of many historical topics before receiving formal classroom instruction—frequently via popular culture.” (310) One of the challenges facing teachers is identifying students’ pre-instructional assumptions (or the absence of such

assumptions), which often requires careful attention to comments made by students in class. Teachers who have an accurate sense of the understandings that young people have of the past will be in the best position to develop the abilities of their students to appreciate historical complexity.

In his Internet column, C. Frederick Risinger lists some of his favorite sites for teaching social studies, including recommendations sent to him by NCSS members in response to his request to readers to submit the sites they find most useful. He welcomes such suggestions and urges us as social studies educators to do what we can to promote social studies and civic education in our communities: “The nation needs it...and us.” (315)

Much of this issue of *Social Education* is devoted to a special section on the College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework for Social Studies State Standards, which was released online in September, and will soon be available in print format in an NCSS Bulletin. The C3 Framework offers guidance on enhancing the rigor of state standards in K-12 civics, economics, geography, and history. As Michelle M. Herczog, who is NCSS president-elect and the guest editor of the special section, points out

The C3 Framework emphasizes the acquisition and application of knowledge to prepare students for college, career, and civic life. It envisions social studies instruction as an Inquiry Arc of interlocking and mutually reinforcing elements that speak to the intersection of ideas and learners. The four dimensions of the Inquiry Arc center on the use of questions to spark curiosity, guide instruction, and deepen investigations, enabling students to acquire rigorous content, and to develop their knowledge and ideas in real-world settings in order to become active and engaged citizens in the 21st century. (316)

The Framework is the first nationally published framework for standards in social studies to be aligned with the Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts and Literacy in History/Social Studies.

The contributors to the special section include many of the leaders who developed the C3 Framework: Kathy Swan, C3 project director and lead writer; Susan Griffin, chair of the C3 Framework Task Force of Professional Organizations; S. G. Grant and John Lee, senior advisors and contributing writers to the C3 Framework; and Bruce VanSledright, Meira Levinson, and Peter Levine, members of the C3 writing team. The special section also includes a perspective on the C3 Framework from Michael Long, an elementary principal in Whittier, California, and a lesson plan on the Black Death developed by former NCSS president Michael M. Yell, which will be helpful to teachers interested in aligning their lessons with the C3 Framework.

Further details about the special section are included in the Introduction of the Guest Editor, Michelle M. Herczog, on page 316.

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