

Editor's Notebook

One of our most important roles as social studies educators is to introduce students to controversial issues so as to prepare them to take informed action as citizens. Most of this edition of *Social Education* deals with the challenge of addressing LGBTQ+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer/Questioning) issues through social education. In addition to this special section, our regular columns also deal with a wide range of contemporary and historical issues.

The C3 Framework aims to prepare students to take informed action, and the first stage toward this aim is to train them in asking the right questions. The authors of this issue's column on Teaching the C3 Framework are four educators from the Right Question Institute (RQI)—Andrew P. Minigan, Sarah Westbrook, Dan Rothstein, and Luz Santana. Noting that many teachers are more likely to have been trained to ask teacher-generated questions than student-created questions, they recommend the RQI's Question Formulation Technique for developing these abilities in students.

In its upcoming term, the Supreme Court will issue decisions on many controversial issues, including gerrymandering, marriage equality and religious freedom, the privacy of cell phone records, the process for awarding patents, and immigration. Catherine Hawke's Lessons on the Law column offers a preview of the most important cases before the Court, and points out that the recent appointment of Justice Neil Gorsuch "has the potential to energize the Court's more conservative wing." (273)

The special section edited by Gloria T. Alter offers important information and teaching suggestions for social studies educators dealing with LGBTQ+ issues in social education.

At the NCSS annual meeting in Washington, D.C., last year, a resolution expressing support for the inclusion of LGBTQ+ issues in the social studies curriculum was passed by the NCSS House of Delegates, and subsequently approved by the NCSS Board of Directors.

The carefully chosen articles in this special section deal with many different dimensions of LGBTQ+ issues that affect schools. The contributors point out that it is important for educators to be familiar with key concepts of gender and sexual diversity, and to have the knowledge that enables them to discredit the many myths that exist about LGBTQ+ youth. (The articles by Gloria T. Alter on learning about gender and sexual diversity through social education, and by David Campos on preventing bullying, contain particularly valuable background information for readers.)

Collectively, the articles offer important advice to teachers on how to organize sensitive discussions of LGBTQ+ issues in class, and how to explain their teaching strategies to administrators and parents. Underlying all articles is a commitment to be supportive of LGBTQ students. Guest editor Alter defines the rights of these students as a human rights issue, and David Campos points out that LGBTQ youth "are a vulnerable population" (288) whose safety and welfare need to be protected.

Barbara C. Cruz and Robert W. Bailey discuss the problems arising from the exclusion of LGBTQ+ history and issues from textbooks and the curriculum, pointing out that, from an academic perspective, this exclusion results in serious inaccuracies. They suggest teaching strategies based on sound scholarship that can promote a social studies curriculum that is more inclusive of historical and contemporary LGBTQ+ persons and events.

J.B. Mayo notes that "teens in the United States spend roughly eight hours per day engaged with media," (306) and examines the impact of media images of LGBTQ people on our youth, offering a set of key questions to ask when analyzing media messages. Jamie Campbell Naidoo shows that the use of the right children's literature can make the classroom an environment in which rainbow families are accepted and welcome, and recommends valuable books for young learners.

Readers of this issue will find abundant resources in each article that they can use when introducing LGBTQ+ topics in the classroom. The legal issues impacting schools—such as bullying and harassment, freedom of speech, access issues for transgender students, and employment rights—are discussed in detail by Maria M. Lewis, Allison Fetter-Harrott, Jeffrey C. Sun, and Suzanne E. Eckes.

Gloria T. Alter, the guest editor, provides more details on the different contributions to this special section in her introductory comments on pages 277–78.

Our Teaching with Documents column provides a strong historical perspective on racial discrimination by examining the debate on the Civil Rights Act of 1875. Although the Act was passed to prevent discrimination against African Americans, key provisions were struck down as unconstitutional in 1883 by the Supreme Court. Andrew Zetts examines the bill and the debate about it in an article that highlights the promise and the tragedy of the Reconstruction period. A podcast by the author that discusses the article will be posted on the NCSS website.

As we look toward Veterans Day this November, Stephen Wesson's Sources and Strategies column examines two responses to the Armistice of November 11, 1917 that ended combat in World War I—a letter announcing the Armistice by President Woodrow Wilson, and a view of the end of fighting from the diary of a U.S. soldier in the trenches in France. Wesson offers teaching suggestions and invites readers to participate in a Library of Congress blog on the subject in the last week of this month.

In his Internet column, C. Frederick Risinger expresses concern at the rise of hate groups in this country, stating that he has never felt as worried "about the future of the United States as a beacon for democracy." (331) He recommends suitable websites for readers concerned about recent manifestations of bigotry and prejudice in our country.

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