

Editor's Notebook

The contributors to this issue of *Social Education* offer rich ideas for the creative teaching of social studies through the arts and literature and some noteworthy articles on topics ranging from inquiry-based learning to a first-hand account of the dilemmas of a history textbook author.

Bárbara C. Cruz, Cheryl R. Ellerbrock, and Sarah Mead Denney present an arts-based approach for the study of the family that advocates a “thoughtful focus on both the universality and diversity of families.” (128) They recommend artwork that is accessible and relevant to the lives of students, and suggest five instructional strategies that they have found especially helpful in teaching about the family.

During the Great Depression, the responsibilities of the Works Project Administration included support for the arts. In our Sources and Strategies column, Cheryl Lederle describes the Federal Theatre Project and suggests ways in which teachers can use the playbills of its theatrical productions as primary sources to investigate the problems of the Depression era. She recommends playbills for Arthur Arent’s 1938 play, “One Third of a Nation,” which drew its title from President Franklin D. Roosevelt’s statement that “I see one-third of a nation ill-housed, ill-clad, ill-nourished.” (134)

Rosalie Metro shares her experiences as the author of a history textbook, and states that one of the greatest difficulties that she confronted was managing her own biases. She offers examples of some specific challenges that she faced, and describes how she resolved them. She recommends that more textbook authors should “‘go public’ with the dilemmas they faced” (141) and that there should be a wider discussion of these issues by scholars, practitioners, and students.

David Farber reviews a dramatic court case that arose out of the protests of the 1960’s. In the trial of the “Chicago Eight,” prosecutors brought charges under the 1968 Anti-Riot Act against eight leaders of the anti-Vietnam War and pro-racial justice movements, as a result of their role in the 1968 Chicago Democratic National Convention demonstrations. Although five were found guilty, the bias of the judge who conducted their trial led to their convictions being overturned by the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit. In our Lessons on the Law column, Farber discusses the political background and legal implications of this historic case.

At the center of this issue is our annual pullout presenting the annotated list of the Notable Social Studies Trade Books for Young People of 2019, which honors books published last year that have outstanding social studies value and literary quality. The selected books include both fiction and non-fiction, and their annotations identify the appropriate grade bands for each

book and match them with the themes of the social studies standards that they promote. The selection was made by a committee of NCSS members in cooperation with the Children’s Book Council.

In our Elementary Education column, Andrea Libresco discusses two books on this year’s Notable Trade Books list that she considers to be especially useful for introducing elementary students to the vocabulary of civic action and the ideals of civic engagement: *Peaceful Fights for Equal Rights* by Rob Sanders, and *On our Street: Our First Talk about Poverty* by Jillian Roberts and Jaime Casap. Libresco suggests class activities that will raise students’ awareness of contemporary problems and encourage them to search for solutions.

This issue also presents reviews of the books that received the Carter G. Woodson book awards of 2019. These books have been selected by the NCSS Carter G. Woodson book awards subcommittee for their excellence in educating young people on race and ethnicity in the United States. This year’s selections offer rich insights into the contributions of the scientist Ernest Everett Just and other notable African Americans, the experiences of young immigrants, and the Chicago race riot of 1919.

Ingrid E. Fey points out that “the push for high school Ethnic Studies courses is slowly spreading across the country” (155) and describes a ninth-grade course that she developed for her Los Angeles magnet school, which has an ethnically, racially, and economically diverse student body. The course is inquiry-based, engages students in active learning, and has received positive responses from students and parents.

Patricia Krizan investigates the challenges of providing professional development for teachers who are interested in using the dynamic and engaging approach of the C3 Framework, but face the “time constraints imposed by a content-heavy curriculum.” (160) In her Teaching the C3 Framework column, she points out that a firm grounding in the Inquiry Design Model and IDM blueprints enhances the ability of teachers to set the priorities that are necessary to engage students in active learning despite the time constraints.

This issue presents the most recent National Council for the Social Studies position statements that have been approved by the NCSS Board of Directors. One addresses the current challenges of “Youth, Social Media, and Digital Civic Engagement,” and the second deals with the important subject of “Early Childhood in the Social Studies Context.”

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