ELECTRONIC RESERVE COLLECTION

The Electronic Reserve Collection is a service for UNCW students, faculty and staff. Access to the collection is by professor's name or course number only.

The copyright law of the United States (Title 17, United States Code), governs the making of photocopies or other reproductions of copyrighted material. Under certain conditions specified in the law, libraries and archives are authorized to furnish a photocopy or other reproduction. One of these specified conditions is that the photocopy or reproduction is not be "used for any purpose other than private study, scholarship, or research". If a user makes a request for, or later uses, a photocopy or reproduction for purposes in excess of "fair use," that user may be liable for copyright infringement. This institution reserves the right to refuse to accept a copying order, if, in its judgement, fulfillment of the order would involve violation of copyright law.

ONE DOZEN WAYS TO TURN THEM ON TO READING

Etta Miller, Bill Vanderhoof, Henry Patterson, and Luther Clegg

Social studies teachers goals for students are broader than the mere accumulation of facts. To facilitate learning and encourage critical thiilng, teachers need to motivate students to read information and integrate it with existing cognitive structures. This article suggests 12 strategies for helping students read social studies material with greater comprehension and enabling them to interact with the text more creatively.

1. Drama Games. The teacher establishes the scenario for a minidrama in which class members portray major historical figures acting out significant moments in history. For example, students are assigned the task of reading background materials in order to play the role of Benjamin Franklin as he traveled to Europe to persuade France to offer political and financial support to the colonies in their struggle for independence.

Readers are to acquire accurate information for arguments that Franklin might have employed to convince France to support the new nation and fund the Revolution. A variety of sources may be suggested: diaries, different textbooks, biographies, historical fiction, and other historical resources.

2. Simulations. One does not need a computer and software to make use of simulations for motivating students. In a unit about the westward expansion, the assignment is to plan an expedition. For example, students are briefed as follows:

> You are about to lead an expedition from Independence, Missouri, to Santa Fe, New Mexico. You are responsible for determining what provisions will be needed for the 70 people and 18 wagons making the trip. Use your text and maps (other materials may also be provided) to decide what route you will take, locations where supplies may be obtained, and the natural obstacles that may impede the expedition s progress. Be prepared to justify your choices. Draw a map showing your route.

Information obtained through this type of simulation may be used as a basis for developing more sophisticated simulations related to the unit topic. Such books as *Little House* on *the* Prairie (Wilder 1935), Oregon *Trail* (Feltskog 1969), and *Tree Wagon* (Lampman 1953) may be provided to supplement information in the text.

3. Debates. Taking part in a debate on a controversial issue encourages students to read critically to support a position. A history unit about the American revolutionary period could, for example, culminate in a debate about the issue of independence.

Taking part in a debate on a controversial issue encourages students to read critically to support a position.

One team of students could adduce support for the claim that the colonies are justified in seeking the separate and equal station to which the laws of nature and of nature s God entitle them [Independence].'' The opposing debaters would search for reasons to support the contrary assertion, namely, that the colonies are not justified in becoming independent.

A related assignment for individual students would require them to make andjustify ajudgment about controversial issues or events. For example, would the student have participated in the Boston Tea Party? Would the student have joined the revolutionary forces? Forjustification of the position taken, the student could cite information from the textbook, tradebooks, or available documents concerning the particular historical period.

4. The Phony Document. A creative teacher presents students with a mystery of sorts. A sample scenario follows:

> Someone has offered to sell the teacher a document that purports to be a letter from an individual on the campaign trail with Lincoln when he was running against Douglas in the Illinois senate race. Certain events, locations, and individuals are mentioned in the context of the letter.

Students are assigned the task of judging the authenticity of the document by consulting a variety of resources to determine thc validity of the data included in thc letter. The difficulty of the task can be altered to suit the ability of the students to insure that it is a challenging but not an impossible task for the student detectives.

5. What Is Truth? In addition to its potential usefulness as a modeling activity, this activity begins the process of building critical reading skills. It helps students understand the concept of perspcctive as it relates to interpreting and underslanding historical events.

The American Revolution as portrayed in a British textbook differs markedly from its description in an American text. After reading both versions that presumably describe the same event, students are encouraged to determine why such different, accounts exist. Students may be called upon to predict what other events in U.S. history (for example, the war with Mexico) may be presented differently in a textbook published in another country. These predictions could be validated through collateral reading.

6. Oral Histories. The *Foxfire series* (Wig&ton 1972) amply illustrates the ability of students to function as oral historians and documenters of historical anecdotes. Using this concept, the teacher requires students to interview members of the community who lived during celebrated events or significant historical periods (for example, the world wars, periods of economic recession, political unrest).

After compiling an oral history based on these interviews, students then com-

pare this information with the way the events or periods are presented in written histories-that is, text or trade books, newspapers, and magazines. The teacher s role is to guide students in noting similarities and differences and how one s point of view influences what one observes and experiences in a particular event or period. The problems associated with the interviewee s memory and emotional responses may also be identified and discussed.

The American Revolution as portrayed in a British textbook differs markedly from its description in an American text.

7. Current Event Theme. Current headlines provide the impetus for this activity. The teacher appoints students as consultants to the US. State Department to help the government formulate appropriate foreign policy. These consultants gather information from a variety of documented sources to check the validity of data. For example, the student consultants may be asked to advise concerning the feasibility of supporting a group of rebels (or other political group) in some nation of the world. Students delineate the factors (for example, U.S. interests, degree of support of government, by its citizens) used to evaluate the proposed policy and then draw conclusions about the feasibility of supporting such a group.

8. Setting Up Controversy. This activity focuses on the resolution of differences between two points of view about a historical event or person (Thomas and Robinson 1982). Using quoted remarks from contemporaries, the teacher provides two divergent views and requests students to investigate how an event or the action of an individual during some historical period could be perceived in such markedly different ways. The students determine which quotations are more accurate.

For example, during the Great Depression, Franklin D. Roosevelt made a decision to run for the presidency. The teacher introduces this activity by providing viewpoints expressing the belief that FDR would sell out the free enterprise system by make-work programs for the unemployed. This is followed by a presentation of materials asserting that FDR would save the country by putting the millions of unemployed back to work. Students do additional reading in a variety of sources to assess the validity of these contrary claims.

9. Parker Brothers Company Wants You. Students assignment is to develop a board game that either requires knowledge of historical data or an understanding of certain concepts to make a successful move. Another option allows students to construct sets of trivial pursuit questions.

These arc excellent for testing recall of facts about particular areas, countries, or historical data. Games such as Life or Monopoly may be used as a basis for developing others that serve as more sophisticated models of economic concepts and generalizations.

Note: The purpose of activities 10 through 12 is to integrate reading and writing activities.

10. A Pulitzer Prize Awaits You. Setting the stage for this activity, the teacher assigns each student to a newswriting team. This *news* assignment, for example, is to report the events used to justify U.S. involvement in World War II. Information may be collected from texts, newspapers, biographies, or personal recollections. Students then write pieces for a classroom newspaper about significant battles, historical personalitics, and editorials.

11. Emulating Michener. The teacher initiates this activity by the following directions:

> You are an author who wishes to use Texas (or another state) as a setting for a novel that will become a best-seller. In addition to an exciting Dlot, you will need to Drovide an accurate description of the novel s environment. To do this, YOU should provide the reader with a graphic picture of the area or particular city in which your story occurs. Be sure to include appropriate descriptions of the landscape, climate, and the type of animal or plant life and other resources found in the region. As Dart of the plot of your story, YOU may wish to set forth the reasons the protagonists came to Texas and what, occupations they chose.

Asking students to include the materials specified insures that the background reading engaged in will include information related togeography and economics as well as history. Students arc thus encouraged to become more familiar with the physical features and economic resources of the state.

12. Teaching Younger Students. For this activity, older students write or rewrite information about a particular unit to make the text more suitable for younger students. With the teacher's help, the student editors must decide what information and concepts should be presented as well as what vocabulary is appropriate. If a younger group is available, arrangements may be made to have the rewritten material presented as a minilesson by the older students.

Summary. These dozen ways to stimulate interest in reading are examples of ways to increase participation in a social studies class. These suggested methods can be incorporated into the present curriculum to enliven a class. While the methods suggested are appropriate for classroom use, they need of course to be adapted for specific situations. Teachers are urged to Select the ideas that are most workable for them and to make such adaptations and revisions as will fit their purposes. The 12 ideas are a beginning that may serve to generate others.

The teacher appoints students as consultants to the U.S. State Department to help the government formulate appropriate foreign policy.

References

Feltskog, E.N., ed. *Parkman: The Oregon Trail.* Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1969.

Lampman, Evelyn Sibley. *Tree Wagon.* Garden City: Doubleday, 1953.

Thomas, Ellen, and H. Alan Robinson. *Improving Reading in Every Class.* Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1982.

Wigginton, Elliot, ed. The *Foxfire Book.* Garden City: Doubleday, 1972.

Wilder, Laura Ingalls. *Little House* OR *the Prairie, New* York: Harper and Row, 1935. ❑

Etta Miller is an associate professor and Bill Vanderhoof is an assistant professor in the School of Education at Texas Christian University. Henry Patterson and Luther Clegg are professors in the same department.

Membership in the National Council for the Social Studies is open to any person or institution interested in the social studies. **Comprehensive Membership** dues are $50, **Regular Membership** dues are $40; and **Student/Retired Membership** dues are $20 (instructor certification required for full-time student status). All memberships include the newsletter (*The Social Studies Professional*) and the seven issues of *Social Education*. **Comprehensive** members also receive all bulletins. The annual subscription rate for members is $25, which is included in the dues. Single copies are $7. **Subscription** to *Social Education* without membership is $42 a year. To join or subscribe send check to NCSS at address below.

Published seven times a year in September, October, November/December, January, February, March, April/May at 3501 Newark Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20016. Second class postage paid at Washington, DC., and at additional mailing offices, under the Act of March 3, 1879. Accepted for mailing at a special rate of postage provided for in the Act of February 28, 1925.
POSTMASTER: Please send Form 3579 to NCSS, 3501 Newark St., N.W., Washington, DC 20016.

Social Education (ISSN 0037-7724) is indexed in *Education Index, Social Science Citation Index* and indexed and annotated by ERIC/ChESS in *Current Index to Journals in Education*. Copies of articles are now available from the UMI Article Clearinghouse, University Microfilm International, 300 North Zeeb Road, Box 91, Ann Arbor, MI 48106.

EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK

A New Editor s Debut

Over the past two decades, NCSS has had a series of first-rate editors of *Social Education*. Dan Roselle, Howard Langer, and Charles Rivera developed some tough acts to follow. With this legacy, I approach my new responsibilities as editor with a renewed vigor to confront the challenges of today's agenda for the social studies.

Social Education is the flagship journal of NCSS. It, is also the leading voice for social studies educators in the United States. its pages should be responsive to the needs of all social studies educators but it should also be in the forefront of ideas, issues, and problems that, face the social studies curriculum in the nation's schools.

At a time when I see a delectable opportunity to be profound, I find myself somewhat, at a loss for words, I trust that in time I will feel more comfortable on these pages than I do now. Nonetheless, I hope we can share ideas, review problems, discuss alternative ways of serving readers, and set forth issues for discussion and debate.

As ageographer and geographic educator, I believe I can bring to this journal a sense of location on some issues and problems confronting social studies educators. One of geography's greatest virtues (and some have said, its greatest weakness as well) lies in its eclecticism. Everything happening on the face of the earth seems to he fair game for thegeographer. Rut. it. is more than that-geographers seek to make spatial sense of these things.

A few years ago, the geographer Richard Morrill wrote an essay addressing some geographic questions. "One of the realities of existence [is] that [all] physical and social processes require space to operate," he wrote in reference to the eclecticism of the discipline. Examining the characteristics, qualities, quantities, interrelationships, and the best uses of these spaces is one of the geographer's major tasks.

In another vein, geographer Robert Morrill (no relation to Richard Morrill) advises his introductory students to pursue a simple objective in his course, "At. the end of the semester I want you to be able to look out of' this classroom window-and make sense of what. you see."

To extend this idea to the social studies, we might simply say that we need to help our students to make sense oft he world in which they now live. Such a sensibility will hold them in good stead for the world they will help to shape.

As editor of this journal and in the respnnsibilit ies I will assume for the NCSS publication program, I would hope that we will have the opportunity to explore the common core of the social studies, in effect,, to make sense of it not only for ourselves but for our students.

I am counting on your advice, counsel, and suggestions about, where we think we should bc going.

I am eager to get started. Please let me know what you think we can do together.

Salvatore J. Natoli

Membership in the National Council for the Social Studies is open to any person or institution interested in the social studies. **Comprehensive Membership** dues are $50, **Regular Membership** dues are $40; and **Student/Retired Membership** dues are $20 (instructor certification required for full-time student status). All memberships include the newsletter (*The Social Studies Professional*) and the seven issues of *Social Education*. **Comprehensive** members also receive all bulletins. The annual subscription rate for members is $25, which is included in the dues. Single copies are $7. **Subscription** to *Social Education* without membership is $42 a year. To join or subscribe send check to NCSS at address below.

Published seven times a year in September, October, November/December, January, February, March, April/May at 3501 Newark Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20016. Second class postage paid at Washington, DC, and at additional mailing offices, under the Act of March 3, 1879. Accepted for mailing at a special rate of postage provided for in the Act of February 28, 1925.
POSTMASTER: Please send Form 3579 to NCSS, 3501 Newark St., N.W., Washington, DC 20016.

Social Education (ISSN 0037-7724) is indexed in *Education Index*, *Social Science Citation Index* and indexed and annotated by ERIC/ChESS in *Current Index to Journals in Education*. Copies of articles are now available from the UMI Article Clearinghouse, University Microfilm International, 300 North Zeeb Road, Box 91, Ann Arbor, MI 48106.