

# **The Iowa Council for the Social Studies Journal**

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This issue of the Iowa Council for the Social Studies Journal focuses on SOCIAL STUDIES AS ESSENTIAL. From the American 2000 initiative to the current Goals 2000 reform effort, social studies has been rendered invisible. While history, geography, civics, government, and economics are mentioned in the Title I National Education Goals, social studies as conceptualized by groups such as the National Council for the Social Studies has been ignored. While NCSS has defined and redefined the social studies over the years, most recent definitions carry the spirit of the following: **social studies is the integration of the social sciences and the humanities to promote civic competence.** The concept of social studies as the principal vehicle by which students conceptualize, embrace and display positive citizenship behaviors or civic competence is lacking in the current GOALS 2000 statements. With this deficit in mind, this issue of the ICSS Journal addresses the theme SOCIAL STUDIES AS ESSENTIAL from the perspectives of professionals from universities, k-12 classrooms and professional organizations.

This issue opens with Hartoonian's insightful discussion of the essential knowledge students must acquire to hold the office of citizen in a democratic republic. His sophisticated analysis of the relationship between *virtue*, *learning* and *civic work* in both the public and private lives of citizens provides a stimulating backdrop for the articles which follow. In a second article, Finkelstein and Fitzgerald describe how these ideals are applied in the development of a classroom community at the early childhood level. In a third article, Miller describes how social studies are essential to the primary classroom and should not and cannot be displaced by a narrow concept of curriculum that finds room for only math, science and language. Next, Remsburg describes how the integration of the social studies disciplines can inform the civic lives of upper elementary students as they learn to live "outside the box." In a fifth article, Hamot reflects on the philosophical foundations of demo-

cratic citizenship through the lens of his work with secondary students and the ability or inability of teachers to impact their social choices even when these choices lead to violence. Pereira places a fitting capstone on this issue with her insightful comments as a law-related educator. She constructs participatory citizenship as a role involving examination of controversial social issues and analysis of multiple perspectives. She provides a concrete classroom application in a lesson sequence focusing on the issue of *gun control*.

The important and powerful connection between social studies education and participatory citizenship cascades throughout the six articles in this issue. Despite the diverse educational settings from which the authors originate, their common perspective reflects the value of unity within diversity, public and private responsibility, and the power of individualism tempered by the common good.

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