



SSEC Newsletter

Murry Nelson, Editor

July 2015

I am reviving the *SSEC Newsletter*. I envision the resulting product to be an opportunity for SSEC members to share what they are doing and how that might interest, inspire, or involve other members. This is not intended to be a “brag sheet,” since we already have such things in our own institutions and in alumni publications. Rather, this would be an opportunity to share with a knowledgeable audience that which we are doing in the hope that it may draw useful commentary or provide some impetus for others to emulate in another appropriate arena. We also want to be able to keep up on what the organization and its members are doing because we are a relatively small group, with most of us actually knowing each other. We can also act as an outlet for small articles which may be more appropriate for this forum due to length or focus.

Depending on demand and amount of information submitted by SSEC members, I would envision this newsletter being disseminated 2-3 times during the year. It can act as a kind of connective tissue between all of SSEC membership. A major focus of the newsletter would be the annual meeting, which we will revive in 2016, but we also can publish short pieces, as well as help SSEC members working on grant proposals by providing them with the time and consult of members who can offer their assistance in those efforts.

First and foremost, SSEC wants to remain active. At a meeting of board members and invited others, there was unanimity that we should stay in business, re-examine our NCSS relationship, and have a conference in 2016. The attached report of that meeting, held in Boulder at the home of Jim and Sharryl Davis on April 24-25, provides details.

Corollary to this is the annual meeting determination, which was to be in either Havana or Berlin. Havana was possible, but the restrictions still in place made the quality of such a meeting a bit problematic, so we'll hope to do this in the future. Berlin seemed very do-able, and I was eager to get us to a city which I have enjoyed visiting, and where I have a number of useful contacts. What we have determined is that we will meet in Berlin in June, 2016, either the week of June 13 or June 20, most likely the latter. I am working with my friends at the Fulbright Commission in Germany, with whom I have cooperated on grants for German teachers of English to spend summer workshops here at Penn State. I also worked with them as a consultant in the fall of 2013 at a seminar in Berlin, and attended the annual Spring Fulbright Conference twice (1991 and 2008). The theme of the conference will be “Mending Walls: Historical, Socio-Political, Economic and Geographic Perspectives,” with an emphasis on “Looking at Berlin for Classroom Use in Social Studies,” with sub-themes addressing urban geography; world history; economics, immigration and the EU. There will be a short trip to Dresden on June 22nd, the day after we all assemble on June 21, 2016. The remainder of our sessions will be in Berlin, with a half-day trip to Sachsenhausen, the closest Nazi concentration camp, a very sobering experience. We will conclude on Sunday morning, June 26th, by noon.

Some member news, drawn from our meeting and emails from members:

- Rich Diem continues as Dean of the Honors College at UT-San Antonio and continues to lead Honors student visits to Italy. Rich is looking at retirement this next year, although it may not be looking back at him.

- Jim and Sharryl Davis continue to live in Lafayette, CO, housing the SSEC publications library. Jim will continue to serve the SSEC without pay. Sharryl will continue to provide Jim with sage advice, do limited editorial consulting, and tend to the needs of their five grandchildren.
- Sherry Field has resigned her position as Dean of the College of Education at Arkansas Tech University and is moving back to Austin. She will work in the College of Education Dean's office on special projects.
- Michael and Ilene Berson are still active in so much at the University of South Florida. Besides being a Professor of Social Science Education, Michael is also a Senior Fellow at the Florida Joint Center for Citizenship <http://floridacitizen.org/>. Over the past few years, Ilene and Michael have been working with colleagues at the University of Cape Coast in Ghana to conduct a comparative multi-case study of civic education in kindergarten classrooms serving low-income students in the United States and Ghana. The study is entitled *Young Children as Apprentice Citizens: A Comparative Case Study Analysis of the Role of Literacy in Empowering Civic Engagement in Ghana and the United States*, and is funded by the Spencer Foundation's New Civics Initiative. The study addresses how early childhood curriculum and pedagogy reflect conceptions of the dispositions and behaviors expected of citizens within different national contexts. (See photo below)



The central research questions they have been studying are: 1) How do the United States and Ghanaian early childhood curriculum and pedagogy prepare children to become participatory citizens in a democracy? 2) What are parental and teacher expectations for kindergarteners' civic engagement and behavior in Ghana and the United States? 3) How do Ghanaian and United States kindergartners conceive of themselves and others as citizens? This project includes various data collection procedures, such as document analysis of children's literature and classroom materials, observation of kindergarten classrooms, and interviews of school stakeholders (faculty, caregivers, and children). In order to reflect a culturally relevant understanding of the phenomenon and promote active engagement of young children in the research, video-cued and multi-vocal methodology gives voice to participants in each community and engages them in analyzing the institutions of which they are a part.

In another project entitled *Traversing Rough Waters: Introducing Challenging Topics with Primary Sources in Early Childhood and Primary Grades*, which is funded by the Eastern Region Teaching with Primary Sources Program, Michael and Ilene are exploring the use of primary sources to introduce challenging topics into early childhood and primary grade instruction. Primary sources from the Library

of Congress are used to seize opportunities to use visual images with young learners to foster critical literacy skills. Young children are not only exposed to visual images, but also taught how to "read" them, evaluating and critiquing them for accuracy, representation and style. They use primary sources to pose critical questions related to voice, perspective, power and privilege. When selecting informational resources, pre-service teachers receive guidance on considering the degree to which the content conveys information that children may not already know (i.e., problematize everyday events and make the ordinary uncommon). Moreover, pre-service teachers are supported in overcoming their own fears about emotionally-laden topics and considering how to highlight and frame a topic with an emphasis on life and resilience.

- Greg Samuels is Assistant Professor of Secondary Education at University of Montevallo in Alabama. He continues his research interests in the areas of Teaching for Social Justice and Social Studies Education. His school has recently adopted the new edTPA program which will be piloted in spring 2016. In the meantime, aside from being a 2015 CUFA Executive Board nominee, his excitement lies ahead with back-to-back attendance at NAME and NCSS 2015 in The Big Easy!
- Meghan Manfra is an Associate Professor of Social Studies Education in the College of Education at North Carolina State University in Raleigh, NC. She is currently the chair of the executive board of the College and University Faculty Assembly (CUFA) of the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS). She is also the editor of the Contemporary Issues in Social Studies Teacher Education (CITE) Journal. Meghan wants to remind members to plan to participate in the CUFA program at the annual conference of NCSS, to be held November 11-12 at the New Orleans Convention Center. Conference information can be found at: <http://www.socialstudies.org/conference>.
- Jim Leming, Emeritus Professor of Education at Southern Illinois, sent me a photo of two roseate spoonbills in a marshy area, across from his home, in Florida. He said that he keeps busy, and gave an example of spraying "Round-Up" on a nasty weed. That sucked the life out of him for the day.

I continue to write and research sport history, mostly basketball. I am working on a two- volume history of Big Ten basketball, following up what turned out to be a trilogy of professional basketball histories from 1916-1962. The first book was about the Original Celtics, a team now in the Hall of Fame, that existed from 1916-1929. The second book was about the National Basketball League, 1935-1946 (when it merged with the Basketball Association of America to form the NBA). The third was about the American Basketball League, 1960-62, a creation of Abe Saperstein, which included the first use of the 3-point shot. I also do occasional consulting internationally.

That seems to be the news for now. Our next edition will be much larger and far more interesting, but only if members send me things to include in the newsletter. I'll also update the Berlin conference. Send news to me at my email address-mrn2@psu.edu or, if you feel the desire to use snail mail, Department of Curriculum and Instruction, Chambers Building, Penn State University, University Park, PA, 16801.

Thanks.

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