Current Events & Multicultural Teaching: Infusing Global Themes Meaningfully

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The Power of Teachers

INTRODUCTION
“Besides being an act of knowing, education is also a political act. That is why no pedagogy is neutral... Reality is socially constructed and can be reconstructed” (61-62).

“At the heart of the educational endeavor is the **individual teacher**, whose sensitivity and skills as a professional enable children of various capabilities and cultures to achieve their maximum potential, or, alternatively, whose inability may (often inadvertently) lead to student failure” (124).

“Teaching is not an isolated act detached from social obligations. Teachers must help students ‘connect’ their lives with the larger world, develop conceptual schemes, and not merely accumulate information” (133).
Current Events as Teachable Moments

Part One
“Students need to be encouraged to engage in dialogue with one another in order to prepare themselves for democratic participation in society. Current events reported in news media offer the opportunity... to capitalize on teachable moments” (172).
“The teacher needs to think about issues of difference, power, and privilege raised in the current events he or she decides to focus on, and then cultivate discussions with students in a manner appropriate for their level of maturity” (158).
Difference

“Different” how? From whom? For whom?

Socially created and comparative—Why do some differences matter a lot and some not at all?

Inherently political because it represents power imbalances

Serves to form boundaries and separate groups of people
Politicized Differences

- ethnicity
- language
- race
- religion
- gender
- (dis)ability
- sexuality
- class
“Human beings are different from each other in various ways, and this does not translate into deficiency or deviance when they differ from a traditional norm; it simply means that they are different, but also that they **have the right to be different**... Education should focus on the validation of their cultural, social, and gender differences, and the development of their individual identities... to empower all students [so] they can make a variety of contributions appropriate to their talents, needs, and aspirations” (xiv).

Infusing **GLOBAL Themes** into Curriculum

**PART TWO**
“In a multicultural framework, lessons that broach [issues of difference, power, and privilege] cannot be taught as separate subjects; rather, they must be skillfully worked into everyday lesson plans... Creativity may be required on the part of the teacher, but with practice this pedagogical approach will become second nature” (158).
“It is easy to think of multiculturalism in terms of different ethnic cultures and to focus on a “museum approach,” which views culture as static and treats it as an artifact that can be brought into and out of contexts and interactions, rather than as a component of identity that is always present and ever evolving” (60).
Multicultural Teaching

- Extend concepts and social issues from local to world conditions
- Design activities that involve research to demonstrate variation within (as well as between) groups
- Recognize different cultural heritages and their contributions
- Demystify topics by relating to the lives of ordinary people
- Promote interdisciplinarity through thematic approaches
- Compel students to be selective when confronted with information (e.g., media literacy)
Activity

Broken up into small groups, you will receive a recent news article to read together.

Discuss how the **politics of difference** factor into the news story and how it is reported.

Brainstorm how you could bring up this news story in your own classroom. Think about the curricular content you already cover and how it might relate to current events. How could you modify an existing lesson to promote dialogue on the right to be different?
Miguel Cabrera pleads for family's safety as violence grows in Venezuela

By Cody Derespina

Published July 12, 2017

Baseball superstar star Miguel Cabrera has vacated his beleaguered Venezuelan home in a heart-wrenching Instagram video, but even that measure can't spare his family what might be violence that he could.

As news emerges that Venezuela is experiencing widespread food shortages and escalating violence, opposition to President Nicolas Maduro has even reached him in the United States.

Rihanna is Calling World Leaders to Action—& Twitter Wants Her to Be President

With Speeches And Bright Dresses, Quinceañeras Protest Texas Sanctuary City Ban

The Harvard Crimson

Progress is Happening Too Despacito

“Pasito a pasito, suave suavecito”—Luis Fonsi & Daddy Yankee, Despacito

FLARE

The two-way BREAKING NEWS FROM NPR

NPR
Critical Questioning

- Is this true?
- Who says so?
- Who benefits most when people believe it’s true?
- How are we taught to accept that it is true?
- What alternative ways of looking at the issue can we see?
Mobile democracy for the civic-minded.

Latest Issues

- Should sex education in public schools be LGBT-inclusive?
- Should universities be held responsible for sexual assaults on campus?
- Should states provide in-state tuition for undocumented students?
Curriculum Resources for Teachers

Part Three
The History All Around Us: Roosevelt High School and the 1968 Eastside Blowouts
Teaching Activity. By Brian C. Gibbs. 6 pages.
A teacher uses the activist history of Theodore Roosevelt High School in East Los Angeles to pose students the question: "What would you be willing to do to create change?"

Plotting Inequalities, Building Resistance: High School Students Use Math to Reflect on Social Inequality
Teaching Activity. By Adam Renner, Bridget Brew, and Crystal Proctor. 5 pages.
An article describing how math teachers in a San Francisco high school shed light on the ways economics and racism affect education, housing, and job opportunities.
Teaching about Haiti

All too often in the midst of reporting on Haiti, we hear that the country is the poorest nation in the Western Hemisphere without the infrastructure to deal with disaster. But little explanation is provided as to why, leaving students to assume it must be the fault of the people there. Nor do we hear of the strong grassroots Haitian organizations.

It is important for students to gain a deeper understanding of the history and the roots of the poverty in Haiti. The U.S. has been involved with Haiti for centuries, yet it has received little attention in textbooks or the curriculum. Part of our commitment to the people of Haiti can be to not only increase our support but also our awareness. As informed citizens, we can advocate for respectful and constructive relations with Haiti in the months and years ahead.

Haiti was the only nation in the western hemisphere to end slavery as part of its declaration of independence (1803) — therefore ensuring true independence for all people, just as the study of Black History should be year round, so can our study of Haiti. For example, Professor Madison Smartt Bell suggests that “The Haitian Revolution, though seldom studied in proper detail outside Haiti, ought to be found near the center of any basic curriculum of American history.”

On this page, you will find links to help teach about Haiti, including:
How Many Central Americans of Note Can You Name?
Our interdisciplinary stories highlight universal themes with a humanistic lens.
Loving v. Virginia: An anniversary for interracial marriage
Jul. 18, 2017

Students learn about the landmark 1967 Supreme Court decision that overturned laws banning interracial marriage, and consider the legacy of that decision today, 50 years on.
The Choices Program

Explore the Past...Shape the Future
History and Current Issues for the Classroom

Curriculum Catalog
Formats & Ordering Information
Videos
Teaching with the News
Professional Development
Meeting Standards
Teacher's Corner
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New Curriculum

Nigeria: History, Identity, and Change
Students explore Nigeria's history—from the precocolial to the present—and think about what the country's future might look like.

A Global Controversy: The U.S. Invasion of Iraq
Students recreate the debate surrounding the decision to go to war, assess the war's impact in the United States, Iraq, and beyond.

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Politics

Lesson Plan: How to use social media for social good
Lesson Plan
Social media is an important tool for learning about current events and practicing active and informed citizenship. However, fake Twitter accounts called 'bots' have been used to try to influence public opinion—and not always for the better. Continue reading →

Young conservatives: Climate change is an issue for all of us
Video
There is a growing movement among young conservatives, including evangelical Christians, who support environmental regulations. They say it’s important to act as faithful stewards of the earth. One group, the Young Evangelicals for Climate Action, has grown to 10,000 members in the past five years. Continue reading →

On the 100th anniversary: How World War I changed the world forever
Video
April 6, 2017 marks the 100th anniversary of the day Congress declared war and the U.S. entered World War I. Continue reading →

Submit Your Student Voice
Your name
Your city & state
Your email address
Your story idea, essay or poem
Classroom Resources

Exploring Community History and Cultural Influence
In this lesson, students will explore the role of culture in their lives and in their community. Students will learn that some of the differences among people are the result of culture, and that when we talk about the behaviors and beliefs that groups of people have in common, we are talking about culture.

Type: Lesson
Topic: Family | Immigration | Race and Ethnicity | Religion | School Culture
Anti-bias domain: Diversity
Grade Level: Grades 6 to 8 | Grades 9 to 12

United We Stand
In our schools and in our culture more broadly, we often teach young people how important it is to stand up for themselves. Too often, however, we focus such lessons on the power of an individual’s voice. For example, a lesson may be about an individual child standing alone who somehow finds a way to stand up to a big, scary bully. But it’s equally, if not more, important to communicate to children the power of standing up with others and speaking out against unfairness or injustice. In this lesson, students will read a short biography of César Chávez—one of our nation’s greatest labor leaders. They will examine how much of the success attributed to Chávez was the result of the efforts of thousands of other people helping and supporting him. Students will learn about labor unions and reflect on how powerful it can be to speak up with others for change.

Type: Lesson
Topic: Immigration
Anti-bias domain: Action | Diversity
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Teaching Big Ideas with Little Kids

Linda Christensen on How Our Stories Build Community
Redefining Multicultural Education
List members

LatinosforEducation @Latinos4Ed
We develop, place, and connect essential Latino leadership in the education sector #Latinos4Ed
Founder: @AmanFernan24 | Tweets by @rd_leyva

i am a migrant @iamamigrant
Daily stories of #migrants & #diaspora around the world. Read here: iamamigrant.org. Powered by @UNmigration, not necessarily its opinion.

NCSD @diverse_schools
We are a network of national civil rights orgs, research centers, and comm. groups working to expand support for gov’t policies that promote school integration.

EduColor Movement @EduColorMVMT
We are a collective of activists of color fighting for educational equity and social justice in school systems. #EduColor is our hashtag. Putting in the work.

Habitat Pro @HabitatProAssn
Habitat Pro Association is a non-profit organization uniting indigenous and non-indigenous peoples in the Americas to preserve territories and traditions

Global Americans @LatAmGoesGlobal
Global Americans: analysis and opinion on the region from leading scholars and activists. Sign up for our newsletter: ow.ly/kUfe306Nb3e
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#edchat  #GlobalEd
#elemchat  #geography
#RightToBeDifferent  #mathchat
#multicultural  #scichat
#diversity  #artsed
#inclusion  #musiced
#phyled


Galczynski, M., Tsagkaraki, V., & Ghosh, R. (2015). Further unpacking multiculturalism in the classroom: Continuing to explore the politics of difference through current events
Chapter 6

TEACHING STRATEGIES AND EVALUATION

Charlotte and Peese are Grade 3 students in a Montreal English school. Charlotte belongs to an anglophone family, while Peese is an Inuit girl from Canada’s northernmost territory, Nunavut. Both are bright students, except when it comes to skills testing. Yesterday, Nancy, the class teacher, gave Charlotte and Peese a test in which they were to make models using Lego and other building blocks. While Charlotte did the exercise quickly and easily, Peese had a difficult time figuring out the materials and the exercise. This was not the case, however, when the arts and crafts teacher gave exercises that involved making things using traditional materials and techniques. The teachers are in a dilemma as to how to evaluate the two girls overall. Moreover, Charlotte’s mother has recently expressed concern that her daughter may have a learning disability. The school principal, Mr. Cherif, communicated this to Nancy in hopes that she would begin filling out the appropriate paperwork. Mr. Cherif also suggested that Peese might qualify for the special education program because of her linguistic difficulties. This way, both girls would be exempt from participating in the standardized assessment being piloted in the school at the end of the year.

• If you were the teacher in this situation, how would you respond?
• Do you think it is fair to evaluate certain students differently than their peers based on separate criteria or by using alternate methods?
• To what extent do children’s mental and physical abilities affect their educational and life opportunities?

INTRODUCTION

Classroom teachers must be aware that there are countless variables such as the school environment, students’ attributes and life experiences that might influence teaching and learning.