

TEACHING ABOUT CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES - GUIDELINES

Teachers should employ the same methods in handling controversial issues that characterize effective teaching at any time.

- A. The teacher, in selecting both the content and the method of instruction, should be mindful of the maturity level of the students.
- B. The teacher should assure him/herself that the controversial subject to be discussed belongs within the framework of the curriculum to be covered, that the subject is significant as well as meaningful for the students, and that the discussion will contribute to developing the skills of critical thinking, problem-solving, and self-expression.
- C. The presentation should be impartial and that will ensure a wide range of information and interpretation for the students' consideration and strives to present a balance among many points of view.
- D. The teacher should not use the classroom as a personal forum. He/she should not employ the techniques of the demagogue or the propagandist for attention, for control, or simply for color. The teacher has the right to identify and express his/her own point of view in the classroom as long as he/she indicates clearly that it is his/her own.
- E. The teacher should emphasize keeping an open mind, basing one's judgment on known facts, looking closely at facts to evaluate them in terms of the subject under discussion, and being ready to change one's opinion should new facts come to light.
- F. The emphasis should always be on the method of forming an opinion as much as on the opinion formed.

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