

Tips on teaching controversial issues

Controversial issues are a vital part of education because it is through discussion and analysis of these issues that students gain valuable experience on how to think both critically and creatively. The important issue with teaching controversial issues is “how” we go about it.

Here are some tips on what other teachers do:

Clarke, Pat. (2005). *Teaching controversial issues: A four-step classroom strategy for clear thinking on controversial issues*. <link to: <https://bctf.ca/GlobalEd/TeachingResources/ClarkePat/TeachingControversialIssues.html>> BCTF/CIDA Global Classroom Initiative.

Cowhey, Mary. (2005). *Heather’s moms got married*. <link to http://www.mcowhey.com/heather_s_moms_got_married_91405.htm> Rethinking Schools, Spring.

Heaney, April. (n.d.). *Approaching controversial issues in class discussion*. <link to http://www.uwyo.edu/learn/_files/docs/brownbag_docs/discussionissues.pdf> University of Wyoming.

Highberg, Nels P. (May 10, 2010). *Leading effective classroom discussions on controversial issues*. <link to <http://chronicle.com/blogs/profhacker/leading-effective-classroom-discussions-on-controversial-issues/23834>> Chronicle of Higher Education blog post.

Moore, Alicia L. and Deshaies, Molly. (2012). *10 tips for facilitating classroom discussions on sensitive topics*. <link to http://www-tc.pbs.org/tpt/slavery-by-another-name/media/cms_page_media/128/Ten%20Tips%20for%20Facilitating%20Classroom%20Discussions%20on%20Sensitive%20Topics_Final.pdf> Twin Cities Public Television Inc.

Teaching Tolerance. (n.d.). *Teaching controversy*. <link to <http://www.tolerance.org/publication/chapter-4-teaching-controversy>> Chapter 4 in Teaching Tolerance, a project of the Southern Poverty Law Center.

Warren, Lee. (2002). *Managing hot moments in the classroom*. <link to: <http://isites.harvard.edu/fs/html/icb.topic58474/hotmoments.html>> Derek Bok Center for Teaching and Learning, Harvard University.

Weil, Zoe. (June 11, 2012). *Ethics without indoctrination*. <link to <http://humaneeducation.org/blog/2012/06/11/ethics-without-indoctrination/>> Humane Connection blog, Institute for Humane Education.

You can also talk with other teachers in your school, teaching venue, or online community, and find out who has done it successfully and how.