TEACHING SOCIAL ISSUES IN THE COMMON-CORE ERA
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Teaching Social Issues in the Common-Core Era

Expert Presenters:


**Erin Angell**, high school English teacher, Palo Alto High School, Calif., and co-creator of the Social Justice Pathway curriculum

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An on-demand archive of this webinar will be available at www.edweek.org/go/webinar in less than 24 hrs.
TEACHING SOCIAL ISSUES IN THE COMMON CORE ERA

SOCIAL STUDIES, LITERACY, AND SOCIAL JUSTICE
RUCHI AGARWAL-RANGNATH, ED.D.
AGENDA

- Objectives
- Research surrounding Elementary Social Studies
- Introduction of Framework
- Example of lesson
- Closure
OBJECTIVES

• Participants of this session will:
  • Learn the components of the framework presented in this session
  • Discuss ways in which the framework can be used to teach Social Studies from a social justice perspective and meet Common Core standards
FROM THE RESEARCH

• In K-6 settings, attention to Social Studies is often limited or absent from daily practice
• If Social Studies is taught it is usually 1-2 times a week
• Many teachers are required to use a textbook which focuses little on critical thinking and multiple perspectives
• Accountability measures attached to Literacy and Math make it difficult to find space to teach anything else
• Little resources and time are allocated by schools and districts toward Social Studies
• Voices outside of the white, male, European, middle-class are often silenced in the curriculum
• Textbooks share only the mainstream narrative
COMMON CORE

• Standards for history/social science integrated into K-5 standards
• There is a push for the integration of Literacy and Social Studies in many schools
BURNING QUESTIONS

• How can we teach Social Studies and Literacy as complementary subjects and meet Common Core Standards?
• How do we transform and restructure mandated Social Studies curriculum to teach from a critical, social justice perspective?
FRAMEWORK

- Inspiring Wonder
- Painting the Picture
- Connecting the Past to the Present
- Facilitating Change
PREMISE OF FRAMEWORK

• To support teachers in:
  • Integrating social studies content in language arts
  • Teaching textbook material from a critical lens
  • Meeting common core standards
  • Developing social studies curriculum which integrates multiple perspectives and honors the voices and experiences of all members of our society
TEACHING MULTIPLE PERSPECTIVES

• Challenging the Eurocentric narrative by integrating multiple perspectives into the curriculum, especially the voices of those dominated, marginalized, or traditionally excluded in texts.

• Juxtaposing historical text and content against various points of reference, multiple perspectives, so that our students can develop a more critical and comprehensive understanding of the past and the present.
TENETS OF FRAMEWORK

• **Inspiring Wonder**: teacher facilitates curiosity and wonder in students
• **Painting the Picture**: students work to uncover the past and critically examine various sources of information from multiple perspectives to see the way history changes and moves as more information is collected
• **Application**: teacher provides a space for students to process and synthesize content knowledge based on their explorations and interpretations of history
• **Connecting the Past to the Present**: students draw parallels and connections between the past and the present
• **Facilitating Change**: students investigate ways they can make change within their schools and communities
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<th>Introducing Content</th>
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<th>Application Activity</th>
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<tr>
<td>Instill wonder</td>
<td>Challenge conceptions</td>
<td>Demonstrate knowledge</td>
<td>Evoke critical conversation</td>
<td>Move toward change</td>
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<td>Build on prior learning</td>
<td>-Children's literature -Asking questions -Role-play and simulations -Examine primary sources -guest speakers -Film/video -Document analysis -Multiple perspectives (those dominated, marginalized, or excluded) -Share examples of “real people” including children</td>
<td>-Write letters from different points of view -Dialogue poems -Literature circles -First person narratives -Power point presentation -dramatization -create visual art -debate -write and publish -Reflective writing</td>
<td>-Discussion -Reflective writing -Critique social problems -Connect struggles of the past to the present</td>
<td>-Writing Letters -Fund-raising -Community work -School-based activism -Organize social action launch campaign</td>
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MEXICAN-AMERICAN WAR

4.2 Students describe the social, political, cultural, and economic life and interactions among people of California from the pre-Columbian societies to the Spanish mission and Mexican rancho periods.
ARTIFACT ANALYSIS
INSPIRING WONDER

• What do you see in the picture?
• Who is shown with power? Who is not?
• Why do you think this drawing was created?
• Who may benefit from this drawing? Who may be harmed by this drawing?
• What else do you notice?
TEXT ANALYSIS
PAINTING THE PICTURE

• Read from your textbook about the Mexican American War. Be sure to look closely at the illustrations in the text as well. In groups, discuss the following questions:
  • What do you learn about the Mexican American War?
  • Do the pictures in the text relay the same message as the text?
  • What does the text include about the lives and thoughts of the Mexicans?
  • Who is represented in the text? Who is not represented?
  • What questions do you have about the Mexican American War that are not addressed in this textbook passage?
TEXT ANALYSIS

• Read the passage about the Mexican American War from the book, A People’s History of the United States. Be sure to look closely at the illustrations in the text as well. In groups, discuss the following questions:
  • What do you learn about the Mexican American War?
  • Do the pictures in the text relay the same message as the text?
  • What does the text include about the lives and thoughts of the Mexicans?
  • Who is represented in the text? Who is not represented?
  • What questions do you have about the Mexican American War that are not addressed in this textbook passage?
TEXT-TO-TEXT ANALYSIS

- How are the two texts similar?
- How are they different?
- What did you learn from one text that you did not learn from the other?
- Why are the texts different?
- Whose story is told? Who story is not told?
Through a text analysis and text-to-text analysis, we can meet the following anchor standards:

- Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.
- Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.
- Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, including the validity of the reasoning as well as the relevance and sufficiency of the evidence.
CONTINUE TO PAINT THE PICTURE

- Share texts from multiple perspectives
- Role plays and simulations
- Videos
- Field trips
- Documents analysis
In a dialogue poem, a pair of students juxtapose two different perspectives to create a poem that intersects and diverges with the unique thoughts of two different people. Students are developing a poem that shares the narratives of two people who may think very differently. The poems can also point out similarities between two people who might not seem to have much in common. Dialogue poems can be an especially powerful strategy to get students to understand multiple perspectives and empathize with those who have different life experiences.

Students draw on what they have learned, previous texts they’ve read, and their lived experience to construct their historical understanding of what occurred.
Through a dialogue poem, we can meet the following anchor standards:

- Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
- Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, and editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach.
- Use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing and to interact and collaborate with others.
CONNECTING TO THE PRESENT

• What connections can you make between the Mexican American War and current events today?
• Through group discussion, we can meet the following anchor standards:
  • Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on topics and texts, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly.
FACILITATING ACTION

• What does the Mexican American War teach us about resistance and change?
• How might we make change in our school and community?
HOW CAN THE FRAMEWORK HELP?

- Provides ways for teachers to enrich Social Studies curriculum
- Encourages integration of Language Arts and Social Studies
- Allows one to teach Social Studies for social justice and meet Language Arts Common Core Standards.
CONTACT INFORMATION

• Ruchi Agarwal-Rangnath, Ed.D.
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• Social Studies, Literacy, and Social Justice in the Common Core Classroom: A Guide for Teachers
  • Available at TC Press
    http://store.tcpress.com/0807754080.shtml
PERSPECTIVES for a DIVERSE AMERICA

A K-12 LITERACY-BASED ANTI-BIAS CURRICULUM
PAUSD DISTRICT-WIDE DEVELOPMENTAL ASSETS SURVEY RESULTS (2011)
Social Justice Pathway

“Service, not Volunteerism”

P.B.L.

Social Justice

Interdisciplinary

Self-Directed
The Power of Place

Power, Wealth & Property in CA

Magical Realism & House of Spirits

Unit Motifs:
Natural World vs. Civilization
Social Class & Politics
Balance & Cycles

Support Lessons:
Human & Physical Geography
Laws, Rights & Ownership
Church & Settlement

Support Lessons:
Poetry of Pablo Neruda
Defining Magical Realism

Summative Assessments: (Im)migration Project, Genre Essay
Addressing Common Core

Interdisciplinary Studies

Reading & Writing Standards requiring analysis/use of:

- Cultural experiences
- Different mediums
- Informational texts
- Maps & other graphics

P-B-L

Digital portfolios
PROJECT-BASED LEARNING

WHY "PBL"?
Federally funded study of PBL in high schools show students score higher on standardized tests & teachers satisfaction is greater than in traditional class.

WHAT IS "PBL"?
Students learn by doing--applying what they are taught to complex, "real world" problems.

BEYOND THE CLASSROOM
Each unit, students will leave the classroom for experiential learning in the field. Each student will participate in an internship in an area of their interest.
**STUDENT BENEFITS & UNIQUE FEATURES**

**INTERNSHIPS**
**DESCRIPTION:** As a service model rather than a volunteer model, Paly Social Justice Pathway students will be partnered with local social justice advocacy groups.

**OTB? OTC!**
**DESCRIPTION:** Outside of the Class! Each unit features a field trip, training, experiential learning activity, or guest speaker.

**COHORT**
**DESCRIPTION:** Students and teachers (also TA) are grouped across three years for a "School within a School" experience.

**CAPSTONE**
**DESCRIPTION:** Pathway culminates with Capstone Project. Student(s) identify need, generate sustainable plan, execute and reflect on measurable goals.
MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Paly Social Justice PATHWAY

Contact Mr. Bloom and Ms. Angell for details
ebloom@pausd.org  eangell@pausd.org
4 Goals = 4 Anti-bias domains

IDENTITY
Each child will demonstrate self-awareness, confidence, family pride, and positive social identities.

DIVERSITY
Each child will express comfort and joy with human diversity; accurate language for human differences; and deep, caring human connections.

JUSTICE
Each child will increasingly recognize unfairness, have language to describe unfairness, and understand that unfairness hurts.

ACTION
Each child will demonstrate empowerment and the skills to act, with others or alone, against prejudice and/or discriminatory actions.
Perspectives for a Diverse America provides a free online anthology of hundreds of diverse texts that are meaningful to students, related to the anti-bias domains, and consistent with the college and career readiness standard’s approach to complexity.
INTEGRATED LEARNING PLAN

The Perspectives Integrated Learning Plan features multiple curricular phases that promote social action and meet the literacy goals of Common Core. Each phase offers a variety of strategies and tasks you can select and combine based on the needs of your students, your essential question and on the central text you select.

Word Work
Students increase their ability to comprehend and produce language by accessing and using key vocabulary from the central text in their own reading, writing, speaking and listening.

Do Something
Students demonstrate their anti-bias awareness and proficiency through their everyday behavior or coordinated social action.

Write To The Source
Students improve their writing skills by responding to ideas and claims found in the central text and by using the text to support their own reflection and analysis.

Close And Critical Reading
Students improve their reading comprehension skills by analyzing, interpreting, critiquing and making connections to the central text in ways that help them form their sense of self and their views of the world.

Community Inquiry
Students develop their speaking and listening skills by engaging in meaningful conversation about the central text, relating the discussion back to the text and to the anti-bias standards.
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Required Reading from *Education Week*:

**Spotlight on Literacy and the Common Core**
Many English/Language arts teachers are preparing their students for the Common Core State Standards. In this Spotlight, look at how instructional materials are being evaluated in the common core-era, understand how “skimming” is used in literary analysis, and see how films can be a tool for critical reading.