

INST10 - Miscellaneous Instructional Policies: Teaching About Controversial Issues

I - Instruction

TEACHING ABOUT CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES

A democratic society often involves addressing controversial issues, and knowledge and understanding of these issues are essential components of a well-rounded education.

The teacher, as a respected figure in the classroom and community, holds significant responsibility in shaping the educational experience of all students. Teachers must ensure that personal views do not interfere with the instructional program and maintain professionalism in handling controversial topics.

To ensure that controversial issues are handled fairly, objectively, and with educational value, these issues may be included in the curriculum, provided the following guidelines are observed:

- A. Teachers should instruct students in the principles of critical thinking and provide opportunities for them to apply established facts to relevant problems.
- B. Teachers should emphasize the ideals of truth, honesty, and integrity in the classroom.
- C. An atmosphere of respect and openness should be fostered, where differences of opinion can be expressed without fear or hostility.
- D. The constitutional rights of due process and freedom of speech will be upheld for both students and teachers when dealing with controversial issues.
- E. Teachers should encourage students to withhold judgment until all relevant facts have been gathered, critically analyzed, and verified for accuracy.
- F. Students should be encouraged to take responsibility for their beliefs, opinions, attitudes, and actions.
- G. Emphasis should be placed on teaching students *how* to think critically rather than *what* to think.