

**IMB ©
TEACHING ABOUT
CONTROVERSIAL / SENSITIVE ISSUES**

Democratic tradition often involves dealing with controversial issues. Knowledge and understanding of such issues are an indispensable part of education.

The teacher holds a position of authority and respect in the classroom and community, and by virtue of that position has great responsibility in the formation of the education of all students. It must be clear that personal views are not a part of the instructional program and must be tempered by the responsibility to maintain professionalism.

To ensure that controversial issues are dealt with fairly and objectively, and with instruction as their goal, such issues may be a part of the curriculum as long as the following policies are observed:

- A. Teachers should instruct students in the principles and techniques of the scientific method and provide opportunities for practice in applying established facts to specific problems.
- B. Teachers should seek to develop in students the ideals of truth and honesty.
- C. All personnel should seek to create an atmosphere in which difference of opinion can be voiced without fear and hostility and with mutual respect for all viewpoints.
- D. Constitutional guarantees of due process and freedom of speech will continue to be observed as to students and teachers alike when they are involved in a controversial issue.
- E. Teachers should encourage the suspension of judgment and conclusions until all relevant and significant facts have been assembled, critically examined, and checked for accuracy.
- F. Teachers should seek to develop in students a sense of responsibility for their beliefs, opinions, attitudes, and actions.
- G. Teachers should place major emphasis upon "why" and "how" to think rather than "what" to think.

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