

Best practices for teaching the moment (no matter what your subject area)

Compiled from sources listed at end for Civic Engagement at Gavilan College

1. Decide that your class can/will be a place to process and respond to the news, and make it safe. Decide with students what topics are relevant or limits/ground rules students want to have in place. Make agreements on how respectful discourse looks, and expect a variety of opinions. Make space for that. **Your ideas on how:**

2. Be informed as a teacher so you can be a credible, sympathetic, helpful presence for students struggling with today's news, this week's ICE raid, or this month's traumatizing overseas events. The *NYT*, *Washington Post*, *Mercury News*, and other respected newspapers offer free morning summaries; every political spectrum is on the Internet. Reject the bubble and learn what is happening in your area, state, country, and world. **Your ideas on how to stay informed:**

3. Model that we are all responsible for the society we create and inhabit. **Your ideas on how to do this:**

4. Build in time and ways to address current events. Assume that no matter your subject area, there is a way to make teaching (and practicing) your subject relevant and compelling. Here are ideas:

- Beginning of class review today's headlines, or one relevant headline
- Beginning of class use a current issue to connect to your topic
- Make a graphic, statistic, question, or quote the starting point for your work

- Make current events part of the homework

Your ideas:

5. Create class projects based on current events. Samples:

- Students assess their own school library for bias and suggest remedies
- Students learn about local monuments and/or suggest new ones
- Students create art based on their responses to a news event, such as #MeToo, send art to the White House or local policy makers
- Students gather local information on topics such as immigration experiences, prevalence of sexual harassment, need for mental health services, driving while brown, the income gap, lack of living wages, etc.

- Make local projects part of the Community Matters archive at Gavilan

Your ideas:

6. Understand your own biases, and how your upbringing, education, and life experience may be skewing your view. Work on creating space for student voices, not just your own. Give students actual power to help define what they study and/or what projects they undertake. **Your ideas:**

7. Consider making it real by taking students beyond the classroom with a campus, community, national, or international service project. There is plenty to do in our area --poverty, immigrants, violence, environmental stresses, defunded services and schools, and overburdened non-profits! **Your ideas:**

Some helpful sources for thinking about civic engagement teaching:

<https://hechingerreport.org/teacher-voice-troubling-enough-20th-century-history-happening-present-time/> Important values piece on teaching around Charlottesville, with several wonderful examples of students who took charge of their learning to make change

<http://www.teachingforchange.org/teaching-blacklivesmatter> A number of helpful “ways in” to talk about Black Lives Matter issues and to engage students with them, including Hoodies Up day in a Portland HS

<http://www.radicalteacher.net/trumpism/> Some excellent case studies of teachers who seized the Trump moment and found their teaching enhanced

<https://www.nytimes.com/spotlight/learning-current-events> The New York Times takes on teaching everything from the #MeToo movement to how students’ lives are affected by the news

<https://learning.blogs.nytimes.com/2014/10/07/50-ways-to-teach-current-events/#reading> The NYT offers fifty ways to use the news for student learning, and your own

<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/11/30/learning/lesson-plans/investigating-gerrymandering-and-the-math-behind-partisan-maps.html?rref=collection%2Fspotlightcollection%2Flearning-current-events&action=click&contentCollection=learning®ion=rank&module=package&version=highlights&contentPlacement=5&pgtype=collection> The New York Times on teaching the partisan math of the gerrymander

https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/answer-sheet/wp/2018/07/10/teaching-for-black-lives-a-handbook-to-help-all-educators-fight-racism/?utm_term=.70d23b50b8c2 The Washington Post tackles teaching about racism in a helpful handbook Teaching for Black Lives

<https://www.accreditedschoolsonline.org/education-teaching-degree/lgbtq-youth/> A great Teachers Guide to Sexual Orientation & Gender Identity Terms with an excellent guide to creating appropriate curriculum under Creating Inclusive Curricula

<https://www.tolerance.org/classroom-resources/tolerance-lessons/sexism-from-identification-to-activism> An excellent lesson on identifying, analyzing, and countering sexism from the wonderful Teaching Tolerance activists

<https://climate.nasa.gov/resources/education/> NASA has gathered a great list of climate change teaching resources, many useful for college students

<http://www.faireconomy.org/resources> Great resources on economic equity with some teaching ideas and demonstration videos that rock

Get Real: How I can use civic engagement to teach more and better

My subject area:

My particular expertise within that area:

How people who know this subject area or practice it for a living do or could make the world a better place:

Which world, national, state, or local issue/s I could connect to my subject area in class (mark any applicable):

Climate change
Ocean pollution
Air pollution
Water pollution
Water scarcity
Noise pollution
Light pollution
Endangered species
Animal cruelty
Food distribution/justice issues
Food quality/obesity issues
Poverty
Homelessness
Housing insecurity
Wage and income inequality
Living wage
War and militarism
Budget priorities
Racism
Sexism
Heterosexism
Cis-Gender privilege
Able-bodied privilege
Services for people with disabilities
Mental health services
Substance abuse
Other/s: