Social Studies Issues are Difficult to Teach
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There are a plethora of issues which present difficulties due to strong parental and lay feelings in a divided nation. Individuals, emotionally, are inherent taking a point of view on either issue. These feelings might be very strong in either direction. For example, a parent objected to her child learning the creed of the Muslim religion, believing indoctrination was involved. THE MESSAGE SPREAD RAPIDLY, UNTIL DISORDER BY PARENTS MADE FOR ITS SHUTTING DOWN FOR THE SCHOOL DAY. Or in another state, pupils were not to study the differences between the Sunni and Shitaa beliefs in religion, fearing this would bring in the Sharia law in the nation. The writer taught school and did relief work among Palestinian Arab refugees on the West Bank, then a part of the nation of Jordan. Most were Muslims in refugee camps who had lost everything in the first Arab/Israeli war of 1948. He taught twelve Muslim boys, six of whom had the name Mohammed, who were taught reading on the freshmen level of instruction. My two years of teaching in the Holy Land was a very enriching experience for a person coming from a rural community.

There were winners as in Israel becoming a nation and the Arabs, seven hundred thousand, became refugees in camps, a dismal sight. Having made five return trips to the West Bank, the refugee situation became even worse, especially from the 1967 Six Day War whereby the nation of Jordan lost the West Bank to Israel, having secured 20 per cent of the land of Palestine from the first Arab/Israeli war of 1948. The writer assisted in clothing distributions after the school day to refugees, truly an eye opener. All of these experiences made for the development of the whole person in gestalt psychology.

Issues in Teaching Social Studies

Which issues should then be taught when student readiness is in evidence? How much attention should be paid to the feeling dimension of lay people in the surrounding area of the school setting? Is it worth teaching an issue when the social studies teacher becomes a target of nefarious statements? Is the topic of abortion off limits for purveying its pros and cons? And yet, it is highly salient for discussing relevant issues. It definitely can make for higher levels of cognition when in-depth research and discussion is being done. Stimulating debates within a collaborative setting certainly might well draw learner attention to the ongoing discussions.

Labor union membership may also bring forth strong feeling by some in the community, but is a less fearful concept of discussion. The writer grew up in a rural area whereby labor unions were looked upon as being sinful and somewhat communistic. Misinformation is prevalent in society. Since that time, with a variety of experiences in learning, the writer has become a strong advocate of union membership. What has happened to a person when these changes in thinking and feeling occur from one end of the continuum to the other?

How much aid in health care should the federal government provide for its citizens? Costs of preexisting conditions is high. The writer’s wife has rheumatoid arthritis which causes much pain and suffering. She was almost an invalid; there were many so called remedies available, but they did not help until Remecaid arrived on the scene which has truly relieved the
terrible consequences of rheumatoid arthritis. Initially, these injections were given every three weeks and each injection costs $2,000. Hardly could those who suffer from this affliction pay out of cost pocket money for these services, but with medicare and being on the husband's health plan, she is able to live a healthy lifestyle. Preexisting conditions has kept individuals off of a suitable health plan. The following are additional issues in the health care debate:

* which is more poignant, taking care of illnesses of people with federal health insurance, or money in the pocket due to lower health care costs of individuals in society?
* what should be covered in federal health insurance, such as preexisting conditions, a child staying on the parents' insurance plan until age 26, staying on an insurance plan regardless of the cost and length of illness?
* should the federal government be more fully involved in paying for nursing home care for the elderly who possess little/no equity?

There are additional areas of need which might well be fulfilled if pupils are to attain more optimally in school and workers at the work place. Health difficulties including respiratory problems cause difficulties in learner concentration on the task at hand. Sneezing, itchy eyes, runny noses, among others indeed take its toll.

It costs money to obtain necessary glasses/lens to remediate vision problems. Where should the money come from for their financing?

Corrections and aids in teeth must be made for many. The writer well remembers from classroom teaching and from observing student teacher classrooms, the number of pupils who had pain from faulty teeth. Cavities, implanted teeth, bridges, caps on teeth, and necessary root canals, need implementation. Unhealthy teeth and gums need attention and might well make for a lack of pupil achievement. Having pain in many cases is not necessary and needs attention in remediation. The total body is involved in feeling well and doing well in the school setting as well as in the societal arenas.

Discussions in governmental involvement in physical health care and, more so in dental hygiene, may arouse strong negative feelings among some members among parents and business. One person mentioned to me that governmental assistance is not needed in pupil heath care since the latter can achieve regardless of health factors. The thinking, here, was that mind and body are separate from each other. The writer had a ruptured appendix in 1962 while working on the Doctorate. This was the most painful experience in his lifetime. This was very costly and could not have been paid for in out of pocket costs. Society may want more money in the pocket with lower tax rates and thus deny proper health care for individuals. There is a long row ahead to hoe in developing feelings of empathy and care for others. Brave social studies teachers are willing to have a good current events program and units of study in tackling discussions pertaining to government involvement in quality health care for all.

Pupils in special education, too often, are denied services which are necessary. There seemingly are many who need professional services for the handicapped and impaired. Assistance must be given so that special education pupils become as independent in life's situations as possible.
In Closing

There are a plethora of societal problems which provide for in-depth discussion. The C 3 Framework, National Council for the Social Studies, emphasizes career, college, and civics objectives for pupils to achieve. Civics objectives, in particular, are very poignant in current events instruction in the social studies. Quality civics instruction is highly important in assisting pupils to become good citizens in society.

References
