

Teaching for Social Justice

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Kevin Barry & Andre Audette



Defining Social Justice

social justice n. justice at the level of a society or state as regards the possession of wealth, commodities, opportunities, and privileges; cf. distributive justice

Much of the debate surrounding social justice has been concerned with the precise nature of fair distribution, and to what extent this may conflict with individual rights of acquisition and ownership.

Oxford English Dictionary

so·cial jus·tice

noun

1. justice in terms of the distribution of wealth, opportunities, and privileges within a society.
2. "individuality gives way to the struggle for social justice"

Google: "define social justice"

The fair and proper administration of laws conforming to the natural law that all persons, irrespective of ethnic origin, gender, possessions, race, religion, etc., are to be treated equally and without prejudice. See also civil rights.

The Business Dictionary

"When we talk and argue about social justice, what exactly are we talking and arguing about? Very crudely, I think, we are discussing how the good and bad things in life should be distributed among members of a human society. When, more concretely, we attack some policy or some state of affairs as socially unjust, we are claiming that a person, or more usually a category of persons, enjoys fewer advantages than that person or group of persons ought to enjoy (or bears more of the burdens than they ought to bear), given how other members of the society in question are faring."

David Miller, *Principles of Social Justice* (page 1)

Transparent Assignment Template

This template can be used as a guide for developing and explaining in-class activities and out-of-class assignments. Making these aspects of each course activity or assignment explicitly clear to students has demonstrably enhanced students' learning in a national study.¹

Due date:

Purpose: *Define the learning objectives, in language and terms that help students recognize how this assignment will benefit their learning.*

Skills: The purpose of this assignment is to help you practice the following skills that are essential to your success in this course / in school / in this field / in professional life beyond school:

Terms from Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives may help you pinpoint a particular skill in language that students will understand. Listed from cognitively simple to most complex these skills are:

*understanding basic disciplinary knowledge and methods/tools
applying basic disciplinary knowledge/tools to problem-solving in a similar but unfamiliar context
analyzing
synthesizing
judging/evaluating and selecting best solutions
creating/inventing a new interpretation, product, theory.*

Knowledge: This assignment will also help you to become familiar with the following important content knowledge in this discipline:

- 1.
- 2.

Task: *Define what activities the student should do/perform. List any steps or guidelines, or a recommended sequence for the students' efforts. "Question cues" from this chart might be helpful: <<http://www.asainstitute.org/conference2013/handouts/20-Bloom-Question-Cues-Chart.pdf>>.*

Criteria for Success:

Define the characteristics of the finished product. Provide specific examples of what these characteristics look like in practice. With students, collaboratively analyze an example of good work before the students begin working. Offer a critiqued example of excellent work with specific indicators of what makes the work successful. Explain how excellent work differs from adequate work. It is often useful to provide a checklist of characteristics of successful work to help the student know if s/he is doing high quality work while s/he is working on the assignment. This enables students to evaluate the quality of their own efforts while they are working, and to judge the success of their completed work. Students can also use your checklist to provide feedback on peers' coursework. Indicate whether this task/product will be graded and/or how it factors into the student's overall grade for the course. Later, asking students to reflect and comment on their completed, graded work empowers them to focus on changes to their learning strategies that might improve their future work.

¹ Winkelmes, Mary-Ann. "Transparency in Teaching: Faculty Share Data and Improve Students' Learning." *Liberal Education* [Association of American Colleges and Universities] 99, 2 (Spring 2013).

Transparent Assignment Template

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Purpose:

Skills:

Knowledge:

Task:

Criteria for Success:



Selected Readings on Teaching for Social Justice

Books

- (*) Adams, Maurianne, Lee Anne Bell, & Pat Griffin (eds.). 2007. *Teaching for Diversity and Social Justice* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Ayers, William, Jean Ann Hunt, & Therese Quinn (eds.). 1998. *Teaching for Social Justice: A Democracy and Education Reader*. New York, NY: The New Press.
- Brookfield, Stephen D. 2004. *The Power of Critical Theory: Liberating Adult Learning and Teaching*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- (*) Brookfield, Stephen D., & Stephen Preskill. 2005. *Discussion As a Way of Teaching: Tools and Techniques for Democratic Classrooms* (2nd ed.). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Darder, Antonia, Marta P. Baltodano, & Rodolfo D. Torres (eds.). 2008. *The Critical Pedagogy Reader* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Davis, Tracy, & Laura M. Harrison. 2013. *Advancing Social Justice: Tools, Pedagogies, and Strategies to Transform Your Campus*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Freire, Paulo. 1993 (1970). *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. New York, NY: Penguin Books.
- Gay, Geneva. 2010. *Culturally Responsive Teaching: Theory, Research, and Practice* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Teachers College Press.
- Goodman, Diane J. 2011. *Promoting Diversity and Social Justice: Educating People from Privileged Groups* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Routledge.
- hooks, bell. 1994. *Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- hooks, bell. 2003. *Teaching Community: A Pedagogy of Hope*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Shor, Ira. 1992. *Empowering Education: Critical Teaching for Social Change*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Skubikowski, Kathleen, Catharine Wright, & Roman Graf (eds.). 2009. *Social Justice Education: Inviting Faculty to Transform Their Institutions*. Sterling, VA: Stylus.
- (*) Steele, Claude M. 2010. *Whistling Vivaldi: How Stereotypes Affect Us and What We Can Do*. New York, NY: W. W. Norton.
- (*) Tatum, Beverly Daniel. 2008. *Can We Talk About Race? And Other Conversations in an Era of School Resegregation*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press.

Articles

- Applebaum, Barbara. 2009. "Is Teaching for Social Justice a 'Liberal Bias'?" *Teachers College Record* 111(2): 376-408.
- Cannon, Lynn Weber. 1990. "Fostering Positive Race, Class, and Gender Dynamics in the Classroom." *Women's Studies Quarterly* 18(1/2): 126-134.
- Chubbuck, Sharon M. 2010. "Individual and Structural Orientations in Socially Just Teaching: Conceptualization, Implementation, and Collaborative Effort." *Journal of Teacher Education* 61(3): 197-210.
- Ellsworth, Elizabeth. 1989. "Why Doesn't This Feel Empowering? Working Through the Repressive Myths of Critical Pedagogy." *Harvard Educational Review* 59(3): 297-324.
- Freedman, Eric B. 2007. "Is Teaching for Social Justice Undemocratic?" *Harvard Educational Review* 77(4): 442-473.
- Fuentes, Rey, Lara Chanthongthip, & Francisco Rios. 2010. "Teaching and Learning Social Justice as an 'Intellectual Community' Requirement: Pedagogical Opportunities and Student Understandings." *Equity & Excellence in Education* 43(3): 357-374.
- Hackman, Heather W. 2005. "Five Essential Components for Social Justice Education." *Equity & Excellence in Education* 38: 103-109.
- Kumashiro, Kevin K. 2000. "Toward a Theory of Anti-Oppressive Education." *Review of Educational Research* 70(1): 25-53.
- Ladson-Billings, Gloria. 1995. "Toward a Theory of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy." *American Educational Research Journal* 32(3): 465-491.
- Mayhew, Matthew J., & Sonia DeLuca Fernández. 2007. "Pedagogical Practices That Contribute to Social Justice Outcomes." *The Review of Higher Education* 31(1): 55-80.
- Shaffer, Kris. 2015. "Homework is a Social Justice Issue." *Hybrid Pedagogy* [Online], May 19.
- Wang, Yan, & Robert Rodgers. 2006. "Impact of Service-Learning and Social Justice Education on College Students' Cognitive Development." *NASPA Journal* 43(2): 316-337.

Articles on social justice education also appear regularly in the following journals:

Democracy & Education, Education, Citizenship and Social Justice, Engaging Pedagogies in Catholic Higher Education, Equity & Excellence in Education, Feminist Teacher, International Journal of Education for Social Justice

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