

### Assignment 10

In one of the films by the Hunter College group, a fifth-grade elementary school teacher works with her students on understanding the complex topic of immigration policies, and the surrounding challenges and outcomes of recent political decisions in America. Callie, the teacher, brings her students into an intricate and thoughtful discussion on politics and immigration by preparing them with vocabulary concepts, enforcing their responses positively, scaffolding their current knowledge and understanding, and creates a context for the topic in their lives. The topic and teacher-student interaction was quite compelling, primarily due to the vocabulary and conceptual understanding of politics that was required from the students, as well as the critical thinking skills required for them to participate in the discussion. It was also a timely subject based on recent political events that highlighted multicultural studies and social justice concepts.

Callie first started the lesson by reviewing the concepts of facts versus opinions, and brought her students into a discussion about the differences between them. She then went further into the lesson by scaffolding their knowledge on immigration and introducing new concepts using a visual concept map. She included all her students in the discussion, giving them positive reinforcement for their contributions. This seemed to evoke Dewey's focus of an "embryonic social community" where students "were encouraged to cooperate and work together and learn from each other" (Walker & Soltis,

2009). According to Dewey, working collaboratively is one way students learn to be members of a community (Walker & Soltis, 2009). The visual diagram she used to help them visualize the concept supported her English Language Learners (ELLs) and any Special Needs students she may have. Using differentiated forms of instruction to engaging learners who have challenges such as ELLs and Special Needs is critical to providing avenues for success and achievement and keep them on a path toward graduation (Suh & Suh, 2007). It is also important that she summarized their opinions and thoughts as the discussion developed, ensuring that the key ideas and concepts she wanted addressed were part of the discussion (Fenstermacher & Soltis, 2009). Callie shows her ability to effectively utilize a Facilitator approach to teaching in order to use student prior experience, and help her class grow and develop academically and personally (Fenstermacher & Soltis, 2009).

After the initial discussion of the topic and introduction of important vocabulary concepts, Callie broke the class into small groups for more targeted discussion. As with many teachers, Callie does not utilize just one approach when teaching her students. She also incorporates tenets of emancipatory teaching, which focuses on concepts related to social and political injustice (Fenstermacher & Soltis, 2009). When Callie discusses the ideas of equality for Americans and the fact that many US immigrants are treated unjustly regardless of their county of origin, she is incorporating principles of Nonconsequentialist Theory (Strike & Soltis, 2009). In this discussion of the inequality facing immigrants in America, Callie is reinforcing the nonconsequentialist concepts of people of having equal value and deserving equal respect (Strike & Soltis, 2009).

From the first, I had a deep respect for the way that Callie interacted with her students. She was engaging, considerate, and encouraging them to participate and learn along with her. Most importantly, she listened to her students and addressed their concerns about the Arizona immigration laws that some of her students brought up. Not only did she listen, but also she created curriculum and lesson plans designed to shed light on this topic and teach them about politics in relation to this important social studies and current event. Callie demonstrated her ability to “turn on learning” (Grant & Sleeter, 2009a) because she built her lessons around subjects that related to her students’ interests and life from their perspective (Grant & Sleeter, 2009a). Several of her Mexican-American students originally broached the topic with her based on hearing about the immigration issues impacting Mexican immigrants and illegal aliens in Arizona. Not only did Callie respond to their concerns specifically to them, she also understood that there would be a further positive impact on the remainder of her class to study and learn about the topic. She brought together facts and information from various cultural groups and led students in discussions of the similarities in cultural groups in the United States. In this way, Callie championed the philosophy of teaching linguistically and culturally diverse students, which asserts that “all cultural groups foster cognitive strengths that can be built on to facilitate classroom learning” (Grant & Sleeter, 2009b).

One questions I have about this film is where else Callie is planning to take this curriculum, and what other ways she can tie social justice concepts to what she has already developed. There may be a way she can foster independent student participation by asking for current event topics, or connecting them to various cultural and socioeconomic injustices seen in their community. Additionally, it would be nice to have

Callie include some guest speakers from the community in the class to talk about this topic as well as others related to equality and justice. Overall, I felt that the topics she raised, and the embracing and supportive way in which she developed the lesson plan for all her students was an excellent representation of dynamic, child-centered teaching for a multiculturally diverse environment.

### **Works Cited**

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