

Exploring Controversial Issues in Elementary Social Studies

Danielle Linowes
Fairfield Central Elementary School

Thomas Misco
Miami University

Li-Ching Ho
University of Wisconsin

Megan Stahlsmith
InterExchange

Abstract: This article addresses the importance of teaching controversial issues, especially within elementary school contexts. In particular, the article explores the underlying elements of justice within controversies and demonstrates the way in which teachers might explore procedural justice within an elementary classroom.

Key words: controversial issues; justice; elementary social studies

Introduction

Value controversies, including disagreements concerning normative and moral issues, are appropriate for elementary school students (Parker, 2011). Controversial issue discussion in early grades can increase student engagement and provide an authentic and engaging springboard to relevant individual, community, and societal issues (Bolgatz, 2005). Elementary students who engage in controversial discussion will have exposure to different and sometimes conflicting perspectives, and learn how to carefully evaluate legitimate alternatives, participate respectfully in group discussions, and ultimately decide the best course of action.

Powerful elementary social studies teaching and learning should incorporate lessons that teach students how to consider ethical and value-based dimensions of controversial social issues (Brophy, Alleman, & Halvorsen, 2013). This is because the inclusion of controversial issues in the curriculum may help improve critical thinking, prepare students to participate fully and

Corresponding author: _miscotj@miamioh.edu

©2012/2023 National Council for Social Studies International Assembly

<http://www.iajiss.org> ISSN: 2327-3585

effectively in democratic societies, encourage political engagement, and develop commitment to democratic values (Hess, 2008). Exploring topics of this kind in elementary grades is “the clear obligation of schools” in order to “promote full and free study and deliberation of controversial issues and to foster appreciation of the role of controversy as an instrument of progress in a democracy” (Parker, 2011, p. 214).

Teachers should move beyond lower-order *how*, *what*, and *why* questions, and pay more attention to normative and evaluative elements whereby students are asked or ask a question involving “*should*.” This line of questioning challenges students to go beyond simply encountering knowledge and instead emphasizes the goal of relevant decision-making, the central purpose of democratic citizenship education (National Council for the Social Studies, 2010).

Literature Review

Controversial issues belong in elementary education. The reality is that elementary students face controversy every day at school and outside of school (McBee, 1996). When social studies is taught meaningfully, it is connected to real-world issues students can relate to (Bolgatz, 2006). Avoiding controversial issues is a detriment to elementary students because it leads to banal content that does not motivate students, who will not have a space to learn peaceful conflict resolutions (McBee, 1996). Elementary students will not become citizens capable of making informed and reasoned decisions without learning controversial issues and being able to discuss the diverse view points that come with these issues (McBee, 1996).

Yet, many elementary teachers avoid raising substantive controversial topics with their students (Bolgatz, 2005). Emotional discomfort, lack of confidence, parental concerns, fear of “getting into trouble,” resistance from students, thinking students are not intellectually or emotionally mature enough, and lack of professional development are too often responses to this most fundamental educative charge (Zembylas & Kambani, 2012). There is concern from teachers about having time to teach controversial issues, and teachers are concerned that while discussing controversial issues they will lose control over classroom behavior (McBee, 1996). Teachers’ perceptions of students being unable to justify their own opinions and the notion that students just accept the opinions of parents and close relatives as their own affects teachers’ willingness to use controversial topics in their classroom (Byford, Lennon, & Russell, 2009). Another concern teachers have is their ability to remain neutral in controversial discussions (McBee, 1996). In addition, the inherent unknown outcomes of normative discussions and deliberations provoke

Corresponding author: miscotj@miamioh.edu

©2012/2023 National Council for Social Studies International Assembly

<http://www.iajiss.org> ISSN: 2327-3585

many stakeholders to avoid the topics of race, class, gender, and immigration in evaluative and problem-oriented ways.

Teaching controversy in elementary classrooms can take several forms. Controversial issues are best discussed in democratic, student-centered classrooms (Misco, 2011). Students need to be able to take on multiple perspectives through discussions of controversies (Misco, 2011). Discussions of controversial issues can be powerful learning tools when teachers are prepared and prepare students for discussion (Hess, 2009). Teachers need to be intentional in teaching *for* discussion and teaching *with* discussion (Hess, 2009). Both are necessary, as the former is designed to teach students to effectively participate in controversial discussions, a skill they will need as democratic citizens. The latter uses discussion as a tool to teach content and critical thinking skills (Hess, 2009). Additional instructional strategies teachers can use to teach controversial issues include documentaries, Socratic seminars, and deliberation (Misco, 2011). The teacher's role is to challenge students' assumptions, create a classroom environment based on mutual respect and trust, and prepare students for the discussion and debrief them afterwards (Misco, 2011).

Immigration is one example of a controversial topic that can be taught in elementary social studies classes. Teachers need to teach about immigration through a historical lens, as well as through a contemporary lens. (Hossain, 2014). While many states require that immigration be taught, it is being taught mostly from a historical perspective. There will always be immigration in the United States; therefore, teachers need to understand the issues surrounding immigration today to teach immigration in a way that is meaningful and relevant to students (Hossain, 2014). When immigration is taught from a historical perspective, it should be taught with multiple perspectives and a social justice bent, which helps elementary students develop skills to look at history and current events from multiple angles (Ciardiello, 2012). Young students are perceptive about what is fair and what is not fair, and they have an interest in learning about issues that address fairness and their rights, such as immigration (Ciardiello, 2012). Teaching elementary students about immigration in a way that makes them question the fairness of immigration laws is a controversial justice-oriented topic that allows students to develop critical thinking skills by examining the world from multiple perspectives.

Teaching Distributive and Procedural Justice

Justice-oriented topics are extremely controversial. All concepts of justice are normative, focusing on what should or ought to happen, and, when they involve people, are moral as well.

Corresponding author: miscotj@miamioh.edu

©2012/2023 National Council for Social Studies International Assembly

<http://www.iajiss.org> ISSN: 2327-3585

While young students will already be familiar with controversial situations that they deem to be “fair” or “unfair,” it is important for students to reflect upon different forms of justice and recognize that each form requires them to ask different questions. We suggest that elementary teachers consciously focus on the forms of justice embedded in each question or topic, ranging from distributive and procedural (the focus of this article), as well as punitive, restorative, corrective, retributive, and social justice.

Distributive justice concerns the fairness of the distribution of benefits (e.g., money, medical care) or burdens (e.g., taxes). Students might naturally be inclined to be more egalitarian or “fair” in their outlook and argue that identical amounts should be distributed to each person. A more productive approach would be to position students to consider other criteria, including needs, wants, merit, and worth (Holmes, 1993). Teachers, for instance, can ask students to examine how people or groups have different or similar needs, such as economic needs (e.g., money) or physical needs (e.g., hunger or illness) and then consider how benefits should be distributed (Center for Civic Education, 2005).

In order to further complicate students’ thinking about how they *should* decide, teachers can also pose questions about equal treatment or distribution of benefits. In early grades, teachers can begin this conversation by employing a scenario involving injuries and the treatment of injuries. A select group of students are assigned an injury at random, ranging from a paper cut to a broken arm. The teacher then poses the question, “What if I gave everyone a band-aid?” This very literal scenario can then be made more complex as the students grasp the principles behind distributive justice. The discussions move from issues directly related to the classroom, like distribution of iPads when there are not enough for every student, to issues of inequality that persist throughout the world currently and in history, e.g., access to fresh food across the United States. For more advanced elementary students, teachers can introduce the example of a government having a tax surplus and offering rebates (e.g., \$300). The teacher can use the following guiding questions:

- Should each person receive the rebate? Or should this be limited to those who paid taxes?
- Should the government consider a person’s “need” (e.g., how rich or poor the person is) when distributing the rebate? If so, how should the government decide?
- What other factors or variables should be considered? Why?

Corresponding author: miscotj@miamioh.edu

©2012/2023 National Council for Social Studies International Assembly

<http://www.iajiss.org> ISSN: 2327-3585

While these discussions are purposeful in that they give students the opportunity to think critically and develop a sense of justice, they also fulfill multiple speaking and listening Common Core standards. Students can also reflect on the scenarios in writing by explaining their opinions and citing evidence to support their reasoning, which is writing standard 3.1 in the Common Core Standards. These types of lessons also fulfill several National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) standards, specifically within the categories of Power, Authority, and Governance and Civil Ideas and Practices. For example, discussion of distributive justice allows students to “examine issues involving the rights and responsibilities of individuals and groups in relation to the broader society” (National Council for the Social Studies, 2010, p. 80) while also exploring how democratic ideals affect our views on those issues.

Procedural justice speaks to the fairness of processes by which decisions are made. For example, how do elementary students decide who is able to select which country to focus on for a geography project? This can potentially be a complex controversial topic. Most procedures of this kind are enacted randomly, but is that *fair*? While some students might not care, for others it might be a more significant outcome. At the school level, how do we determine classroom rules, student responsibilities, and procedures for allocating resources? Subsequently, teachers can highlight the importance of procedural justice in courts and in the executive and legislative branches of government (e.g., the Bill of Rights). For example, how should courts decide the guilt or innocence of a person who is accused of a crime? Why is procedural justice important in this example?

Elementary teachers can incite curiosity and reflection through the use of a process called “moral negotiation” (McCarthy, 2003). Moral negotiation provides a structure to ensure that the issue, rather than teacher or student beliefs or preferences, is at the center of instruction. This also helps students and teachers determine the conditions under which certain responses to a controversial justice-oriented question are permissible, forbidden, and obligatory.

Lesson Plans in Action

In a third-grade classroom in Ohio, a teacher (one of the authors of this article) gave her students the opportunity to develop an understanding of procedural justice, utilizing the exploration of an issue relevant to her classroom. She developed the following lesson plan. During this lesson, the students were very engaged. Giving them the opportunity to discuss issues authentic to their classroom experience was an effective way to introduce procedural justice and get them excited about the topic. This type of lesson is most effective when preceded and/or followed by more

Corresponding author: miscotj@miamioh.edu

©2012/2023 National Council for Social Studies International Assembly

<http://www.iajiss.org> ISSN: 2327-3585

debate about issues in the classroom, as well as discussions of how they relate to broader topics in current and historical events.

Title of Lesson	Procedural Justice in Our Classroom
Standards Addressed	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• NCSS Early Grade Standard: Learners will understand how the rules and norms of groups to which they belong impact their lives.• NCSS Early Grade Standard: Learners will be able to ask and find answers to questions about power, authority, and governance in the school, community, and state.• NCSS Early Grade Standard: Learners will be able to develop a position on a school or local issue, and defend it with evidence.• CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.3.1 Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 3 topics and texts, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.• CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.1 Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons.
Objective	Students will be able to identify and explain conditions under which taking an item is forbidden, permissible, or obligatory and defend their responses with justice-oriented reasons.
Key Vocabulary	justice, forbidden, permissible, obligatory
Materials	Chart paper, pencils, worksheet (see Appendix A)
Lesson Opener	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ask students for their definitions of justice and record their answers on chart paper.

Corresponding author: miscotj@miamioh.edu

©2012/2023 National Council for Social Studies International Assembly

<http://www.iajiss.org> ISSN: 2327-3585

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Correct any misconceptions and pose the following scenario: “A person finds something in a shared area that does not belong to him or her. Should the person take it?”<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ You may pose an alternative scenario that is relevant to your classroom. (This was chosen because there were many occurrences in this particular classroom of students picking up items from the floor and keeping them, even if they did not belong to them.)• Explain the definitions of forbidden (can never do), permissible (may do), and obligatory (must do).• Go back to the original scenario and model a scenario in which it is forbidden to take someone else’s property. Then solicit student input for a scenario when it is permissible.
Small Group Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Split students up into groups of 3-4. Have students find a spot in the room and discuss scenarios in which it is forbidden, permissible, and obligatory to take something from a shared space that is not his/hers.• Circulate the room and ask questions to facilitate deeper discussion.
Whole Group Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bring the students back together in a shared area.• Have at least one person from each group explain the conditions they came up with.• Give students the chance to respond to their classmates with questions and/or agreements/disagreements.• Record responses on chart paper.
Check for Understanding	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Allow students to choose one condition related to the scenario and respond in writing as to why it is forbidden, permissible, or obligatory to take the item in that situation.

Corresponding author: miscotj@miamioh.edu

©2012/2023 National Council for Social Studies International Assembly

<http://www.iajiss.org> ISSN: 2327-3585

Extension	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Link the discussion to a relevant current event, such as China seizing a U.S. government-owned drone from the South China Sea.• Many procedural justice scenarios in the classroom also relate to historical events, which can be explored in a later discussion.
Related Children's Literature	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <u>The Youngest Marcher: The Story of Audrey Faye Hendricks, a Young Civil Rights Activist</u> by Cynthia Levinson<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ This book explains the experience of nine-year-old Audrey Fay Hendricks, who went to jail after protesting during the Civil Rights Era. Students can use this text to debate instances when it is forbidden, permissible, and obligatory to go against the law in order to do what one believes is just.• <u>Seeds of Change</u> by Jen Cullerton Johnson<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ This book takes place in Kenya and addresses the life of Wangari Maathai, a renowned environmentalist. Students can use this text to discuss the procedural justice involved in access to education for girls as well as environmental justice.• <u>Si, Se Puede! / Yes, We Can!: Janitor Strike in L.A.</u> by Diana Cohn and Paul Mirocha<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ This book examines the janitor strike in Los Angeles in 2000 from the perspective of a janitor's child. This text better lends itself to discussions related to distributive justice, as students explore the fight for fair wages.

As the teacher circulated the room, she noticed some students discussing the idea of stealing. She challenged her students to define stealing. Some students immediately defined

Corresponding author: miscotj@miamioh.edu

©2012/2023 National Council for Social Studies International Assembly

<http://www.iajiss.org> ISSN: 2327-3585

stealing as “taking something that isn’t yours,” while another student specified that it is only stealing “when [the item] is important to somebody.” The second student expanded by saying it would be permissible to take something if you know whose it is, “but you don’t want to give it to [him/her].” In contrast, one student noted that it would be obligatory to take something if you don’t know the person, further complicating the concept of stealing (see Appendix C). These differing definitions provoked moral negotiation and gave students an opportunity to develop a critical perspective of stealing.

The teacher also noticed that students grappled with scenarios in which it is obligatory to pick up something that is not yours. Many students cited “gum on the floor” as an instance when you must take it. When the teacher probed further and asked if it was their responsibility, one student replied, “No, but it is doing the right thing.” The students’ black-and-white ideas of what is right and wrong were challenged when they brought up an instance of another student moving away (see Appendix C). Is it forbidden, permissible, or obligatory to keep that student’s things? Most students decided it was either permissible or obligatory, but had a difficult time coming to a complete consensus as a group. These discussions provoked the students’ ability to think openly and view differing perspectives while discussing a familiar topic.

Now that the students had experience with moral negotiation on a familiar topic, the teacher challenged the students with the task of discussing conditions in which it is forbidden, permissible, and obligatory to come to the United States illegally. Undocumented immigration is a relevant and highly debated topic, and through this lesson, the teacher hoped that students would recognize the complexity of the issue while developing their own beliefs.

Title of Lesson	Undocumented Immigration: Justice in a Current Events Context
Standards Addressed	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• NCSS Early Grade Standard: Learners will understand the theme of people, places, and environments involves the study of location, place, and the interactions of people with their surroundings.• NCSS Early Grade Standard: Learners will be able to describe interactions between and among individuals, groups, and institutions.

Corresponding author: miscotj@miamioh.edu

©2012/2023 National Council for Social Studies International Assembly

<http://www.iajiss.org> ISSN: 2327-3585

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NCSS Early Grade Standard: Learners will understand fundamental values of democracy: the common good, liberty, justice, equality, and individual dignity. • NCSS Early Grade Standard: Learners will be able to examine issues involving the rights and responsibilities of individuals and groups in relation to the broader society. • NCSS Early Grade Standard: Learners will be able to analyze how specific polities or citizen behaviors reflect ideals and practices consistent or inconsistent with democratic ideals. • CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.3.1 Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 3 topics and texts, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly. • CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.1 Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons.
Objective	Students will be able to classify and explain scenarios in which it is forbidden, permissible, or obligatory to enter the United States illegally, as well as when it is forbidden, permissible, or obligatory to be deported, and defend their arguments with justice-oriented reasoning.
Key Vocabulary	forbidden, permissible, obligatory, immigration, citizen, undocumented, legal, illegal
Materials	Computer, projector, pencils, worksheets (see Appendix B)
Lesson Opener	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce the concept of immigration and citizenship to students by showing students the following videos: https://www.brainpop.com/socialstudies/usgovernment/citizenship/ and https://www.brainpop.com/socialstudies/culture/immigration/ . If the teacher does not have a Brainpop account, any similar introduction to immigration and citizenship is effective.

Corresponding author: miscotj@miamioh.edu

©2012/2023 National Council for Social Studies International Assembly

<http://www.iajiss.org> ISSN: 2327-3585

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop a class definition of immigrant and citizen together and record the definitions on the board. Discuss the terms <i>legal</i>, <i>illegal</i>, and <i>undocumented</i> with students.• Explain to students that they will be discussing instances when people come into the United States without going through the process of becoming citizens.• Show students the sort and discuss the first scenario together. Explain that not all members of the group have to agree, but they must have a discussion and present their arguments.
Sort/Small Group Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Split students up into groups of 3-4. Have students find a spot in the room to complete the first sort on when it is forbidden, permissible, or obligatory to enter the United States illegally. Students may add relevant scenarios that they come up with on their own.• Circulate the room and ask questions to facilitate deeper discussion.
Whole Group Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bring the students back together in a shared area.• Have at least one person from each group explain one of the scenarios they sorted and why they listed it as forbidden, permissible, or obligatory.• Give students the chance to respond to their classmates with questions and/or agreements/disagreements.
Sort/Small Group Discussion Part 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Have students break up into their small groups again and find a spot in the room to complete the second sort on when it is forbidden, permissible, or obligatory to be deported if you are in the United States illegally. Students may add relevant scenarios that they come up with on their own.• Circulate the room and ask questions to facilitate deeper discussion.
Whole Group Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bring the students back together in a shared area.

Corresponding author: miscotj@miamioh.edu

©2012/2023 National Council for Social Studies International Assembly

<http://www.iajiss.org> ISSN: 2327-3585

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Have at least one person from each group explain one of the scenarios they sorted and why they listed it under forbidden, permissible, or obligatory.• Give students the chance to respond to their classmates with questions and/or agreements/disagreements. Make sure that students understand that there are no right or wrong answers.
Extensions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Write a persuasive letter to your member of Congress explaining what you believe he or she should do about undocumented immigrants. Use evidence from the discussion and sort to support your argument.• With older students, teachers can introduce current immigration policy such as Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA). Students can then discuss this policy or other similar policies in small groups or as a whole class.

It is important to note that this lesson is not meant to be a comprehensive examination of immigration. The topic is utilized in a way that allows students to examine their beliefs about an issue on a societal scale.

During this lesson, the teacher observed students aiming to justify their reasoning and developing their own moral code in the process. For example, one student noted that it would be obligatory to come to the United States illegally if there was violence in the home country because the person's "home might be destroyed," signifying that he sees shelter as a fundamental right. However, the same student classified an undocumented immigrant coming to the U.S. for religious reasons as forbidden, signifying that he may not see religious freedom as a fundamental right. A student in the same group disagreed, stating that if a person could not practice his or her religion in his or her home country, it should be obligatory that he or she come to the United States (see Appendix D).

Throughout the activity, some students looked to the teacher for the correct answer, missing the purpose of moral negotiation. Many students are programmed to see the teacher as all-knowing, but justice-oriented teaching pushes students further. Instead, students are forced to look at themselves for the answers and often discover that one right answer does not exist.

Corresponding author: miscotj@miamioh.edu

©2012/2023 National Council for Social Studies International Assembly

<http://www.iajiss.org> ISSN: 2327-3585

Global Connections

These lessons were created for U.S. elementary classrooms, but they can be adapted to address the same issues in other countries. Immigration is a controversial issue experienced and discussed in many nations; it is not an issue limited to the United States. According to a UN report in 2017, although the United States has the largest number of international migrants, about 80 million international migrants live in Asia compared to 58 million international migrants living in the United States. The big ideas and vocabulary terms of the lessons—justice, illegal/legal, immigration, and citizenship—are universal. The content of the lessons can easily be exchanged with content relating to immigration in specific countries. The lessons can also be expanded to compare immigration between different countries. A continuation of these lessons could focus on the countries immigrants are coming from and look more closely at why people immigrate. Immigration is a global issue and there are ample opportunities in the lessons to adjust and expand instruction to incorporate immigration content related to different countries.

Conclusions

We recognize that elementary teachers may feel uncomfortable introducing controversial topics with their students (Bolgatz, 2005). Teachers, for instance, may face resistance from students and parents, lack confidence and institutional support, and/or think that their students are not intellectually or emotionally mature enough. Nevertheless, we echo Parker's (2011) assertion that schools have a clear obligation to "promote full and free study and deliberation of controversial issues and to foster appreciation of the role of controversy as an instrument of progress in a democracy." This justice approach to the teaching of controversial issues in elementary schools, therefore, provides a useful tool for teachers to help foster informed and reasoned decision making in their students, skills that are central to democratic societies.

Corresponding author: _miscotj@miamioh.edu

©2012/2023 National Council for Social Studies International Assembly

<http://www.iajiss.org> ISSN: 2327-3585

References

- Bolgatz, J. (2005). Revolutionary talk: Elementary teacher and students discuss race in a social studies class. *The Social Studies, 96*(6), 259-264.
- Brophy, J., Alleman, J., & Halvorsen, A. (2013). *Powerful social studies for elementary students* (3rd ed.). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Cengage Learning.
- Byford, J., Lennon, S., & Russell, W. B. III. (2009). Teaching controversial issues in social studies: A research study of high school teachers. *The Clearing House, 82*(4), 165-170.
- Center for Civic Education. (2005). *Foundations of democracy: Authority, privacy, responsibility, and justice*. Calabasas, CA: Center for Civic Education.
- Ciardello, A. V. (2012). Is Angel Island the Ellis Island of the west? Teaching multiple perspective-taking in American immigration history. *Social Studies, 103*(4), 171-176.
- Hess, D. E. (2008). Controversial issues and democratic discourse. In L. Levstik & C. Tyson (Eds.), *Handbook of research in social studies education* (pp. 124-136). New York: Routledge.
- Hess, D. (2009). *Controversy in the classroom: The democratic power of discussion*. New York: Routledge.
- Holmes, R. L. (1993). *Basic moral philosophy*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.
- Hossain, K. I. (2014). Immigration beyond Ellis Island: Suggestions for teaching about immigration in the now. *Multicultural Education, 22*(1), 56-59.
- McBee, R. H. (1997). Can controversial issues be taught in the early grades? The answer is yes! In M. E. Haas & M. A. Laughlin (Eds.), *Meeting the standards: Social studies readings for K-6 educators* (pp. 158-162). Washington, DC: National Council for the Social Studies.
- McCarthy, C. L. (2003). *Moral negotiation and John Dewey* [Lecture]. Iowa City, IA.
- Misco, T. (2011). Teaching about controversial issues: Rationale, practice, and need for inquiry. *European Journal for Education Law & Policy, 7*(1), 7-18.
- National Council for the Social Studies. (2010). *National curriculum standards for social studies: A framework for teaching, learning, and assessment*. Silver Spring, MD: NCSS.
- Parker, W. C. (2011). *Social studies in elementary education* (14th ed.). Boston: Pearson.

Corresponding author: miscotj@miamioh.edu

©2012/2023 National Council for Social Studies International Assembly

<http://www.iajiss.org> ISSN: 2327-3585

United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2017). *International Migration Report 2017: Highlights (ST/ESA/SER.A/404)*. New York, NY: United Nations.

Zembylas, M., & Kambani, F. (2012). The teaching of controversial issues during elementary level history instruction: Greek-Cypriot teachers' perceptions and emotions. *Theory and Research in Social Education, 40*(2), 107-133.

About the Authors:

Danielle Linowes is a fifth grade Language Arts teacher at Fairfield Central Elementary School in Fairfield, Ohio. She graduated from Miami University summa cum laude with a B.S. in Early Childhood Education in 2016. She is currently pursuing Master's degrees in Transformative Education and Literacy and Language from Miami University.

Thomas Misco is a professor of social studies education at Miami University. His research focuses on citizenship education and the discussion of controversial issues in cross-cultural contexts.

Li-Ching Ho is an associate professor in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Her research, conducted primarily in East and Southeast Asia, focuses on global issues of diversity in civic education, differentiated access to citizenship education, and environmental citizenship.

Megan Stahlsmith graduated from Miami University in 2018 with a B.S. in Social Studies Education. In 2019, she received her M.Ed. in Transformative Education from Miami University. She is currently working through a program called InterExchange as a language assistant in La Immaculada School in Vilassar de Dalt, Catalonia, Spain

Corresponding author: miscotj@miamioh.edu

©2012/2023 National Council for Social Studies International Assembly

<http://www.iajiss.org> ISSN: 2327-3585

Appendix A

Name _____ # _____

You find something on the ground and it is not yours. You take it for yourself.

When is it...

Forbidden (cannot be done)?	Permissible (allowed to be done)?	Obligatory (must be done)?
1.	1.	1.
2.	2.	2.
3.	3.	3.

On your own, choose one situation when it is permissible to keep something that you find on the ground. Why is it permissible? Use at least 2 reasons.

Corresponding author: miscotj@miamioh.edu

©2012/2023 National Council for Social Studies International Assembly

<http://www.iajiss.org> ISSN: 2327-3585

Appendix B

Name _____ # _____

Immigration

Directions: Cut out the scenarios at the bottom of the page. Discuss each scenario with your table and decide if it is forbidden, permissible, or obligatory. You can write in your own scenarios at the end.

An undocumented immigrant comes into the United States.
When is it...

Forbidden (cannot be done)?	Permissible (allowed to be done)?	Obligatory (must be done)?

His/her parents live in the U.S. and are legal citizens.	His/her parents brought him/her when he/she was too young to know.	He/she was very poor in his/her home country.
His/her parents live in the U.S. and are illegal citizens.	There was a lot of violence and war in his/her home country.	He/she was not allowed to practice his/her religion in his/her home country.

Corresponding author: miscotj@miamioh.edu

©2012/2023 National Council for Social Studies International Assembly

<http://www.iajiss.org> ISSN: 2327-3585

An undocumented immigrant is deported (must leave) the United States.

When is it...

Forbidden (cannot be done)?	Permissible (allowed to be done)?	Obligatory (must be done)?

He/she pays taxes and has a job.	He/she wants to help make the community a better place to live and work.	He/she commits a crime.
Her/she does not pay taxes.	He/she does not have a job.	He/she has a family legally living in the United States.

Corresponding author: miscotj@miamioh.edu

©2012/2023 National Council for Social Studies International Assembly

<http://www.iajiss.org> ISSN: 2327-3585

Appendix C

Name ks

You find something on the ground and it is not yours. You take it for yourself.

When is it...

Forbidden (cannot be done)?	Permissible (allowed to be done)?	Obligatory (must be done)?
1. you know it's not yours.	1. you're trying to see whose it is.	1. when you but know the person.
2. when some one says hey hey it's mine.	2. if the person does not come then anymore.	2. nobody says it's theirs.
3. you take it from someone	3. when you don't know the person	3. when you are in a park.

On your own, choose one situation when it is permissible to keep something that you find on the ground. Why is it permissible? Use at least 2 reasons.

you're by yourself and you don't know the person if you don't know the person you're not supposed to talk to strangers.

Appendix D

Name _____

Immigration

Directions: Cut out the scenarios at the bottom of the page. Discuss each scenario with your table and decide if it is forbidden, permissible, or obligatory. You can write in Your own scenarios at the end.

An undocumented immigrant comes into the United States.
When is it...

Forbidden (cannot be done)?	Permissible (allowed to be done)?	Obligatory (must be done)?
His/her parents live in the U.S. and are illegal citizens.	His/her parents live in the U.S. and are legal citizens.	He/she were very poor in his/her home country.
He/she was not allowed to practice his/her religion in his/her home country.	His/her parents brought him/her when he/she was too young to know.	There was a lot of violence and war in his/her home country.

Corresponding author: miscotj@miamioh.edu

©2012/2023 National Council for Social Studies International Assembly

<http://www.iajiss.org> ISSN: 2327-3585

An undocumented immigrant is deported (must leave) the United States.

When is it...

Forbidden (cannot be done)?	Permissible (allowed to be done)?	Obligatory (must be done)?
He/she wants to help make the community a better place to live and work.	He/she pays taxes and has a job.	Her/she does not pay taxes.
He/she has a family legally living in the United States.	He/she does not have a job.	He/she commits a crime.

Corresponding author: miscotj@miamioh.edu

©2012/2023 National Council for Social Studies International Assembly

<http://www.iajiss.org> ISSN: 2327-3585